

# PACHAD DAVID

Metzora



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Under the auspices of Moreinu v' Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita  
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“He shall immerse his clothing and immerse his flesh in water, and become pure” (Vayikra 14:9).

Chazal say (Shabbat 104a) “He who wishes to purify himself is assisted.” The implication is that first of all the person himself is obligated to purify himself, and only then does he receive Heavenly Assistance. As Chazal say (Shir Hashirim Rabba 5:3), “Hashem said to Yisrael, ‘My son, create for Me an opening of repentance the size of a pinprick, and I will open for you entrances that wagons and carriages can enter.’”

The difficulty is, how can we demand of someone immersed in impurity, r”l, to begin to purify himself on his own, without any Heavenly Assistance? How can we tell him that if he starts he will then receive help from Above? After all, the first stage, the first step, is the most difficult.

On the other hand, it is necessary to understand the Chazal (Berachot 33b), “Everything is in the hands of Heaven, except fear of Heaven.” Rashi explains: “Everything is in the hands of Heaven: everything man receives is from Hashem, such as height, riches, or poverty. But whether a person will be righteous or wicked is not in the hands of Heaven. It was given over to the hand of man. Hashem presents him with two options, and he must choose for himself yirat Shamayim. This means yirat Shamayim depends on the person himself, and for this he does *not* receive help from Above. This seems to contradict Chazal’s statement that he who wishes to purify himself is assisted, which implies he *does* receive Heavenly Assistance?!

This can be clarified with a parable. It can be compared to someone who suddenly receives a large sum of money, whether due to an unexpected inheritance, or winning the lottery. This person, who is unaccustomed to wealth and does not know what to do with it or where to invest so much money, may very quickly lose his fortune. Alternatively, because he attained the money easily without any effort, there is a good chance he will waste it. Something man attains

## maskil Le'David

One Who Wishes to Purify Himself Is Assisted



easily and effortlessly is also easily lost. Whereas something a person toils hard to achieve, he appreciates and guards with seven eyes lest it vanish. So it is with everything – friendships, knowledge, a job, but all the more so with money attained with difficulty – for then the person knows how to value it properly.

When it comes to yirat Shamayim, the same rule applies. If the person will suddenly receive great illumination and siyata d'Shmaya without any effort on his part, there is great concern he will not know how to properly appreciate the guidance which he was given as a gift. He will also not know how to deal with this illumination and will quickly lose it and return to his bad ways, easily falling into the depths. And then it will be twice as hard for him to repent.

This is why Hashem does not assist right away when a person wishes to improve, but waits for an action indicative of some awakening from below. This is despite the fact that He certainly has the power to help him, as Rashi writes (Megillah 25a), “Besides yirat Shamayim which is placed in the hands of man, and he himself must prepare his heart for this, even though Hashem is able to prepare our hearts to return to Him, as it says, ‘Just as clay is in the hands of the potter, so are you in My hand, O House of Yisrael’ (Yirmiyahu 18:6).”

But when a person begins to serve Hashem or improve on his own initiative, without receiving any help, then he feels the difficulty in the matter. When he later receives enlightenment from Above, he will appreciate that help and guard it closely lest he lose it. In this way it will continue to influence him throughout his life, enabling him to ascend ever higher in his service of Hashem.

In fact, man is never really in a state of “beginning” his avodat Hashem. Since he is born with G-dly essence, he is already in a state of “wanting to purify himself.” If he only guards and preserves that connection with Hashem by observing the mitzvot in holiness and purity, he will merit siyata d'Shmaya to continue ascending higher and higher.

8 Nissan 5782  
9 April 2022

950

Shabbat Hagadol



## Hilula

- 8 Nissan – Rabbi Shlomo Mosayof
- 8 Nissan – Rabbi Eliyahu Shapira, author of *Elya Rabba*
- 9 Nissan – Rabbi Aryeh Levine, Rav of prisoners
- 9 Nissan – Rabbi Chaim Hagar, the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz
- 10 Nissan – Rabbi Avraham Abba Hertzell, the Sifsei Chaim
- 10 Nissan – Rabbi Shalom Mashash, Rav of Yerushalayim
- 11 Nissan – Rabbi Moshe bar Nachman, the Ramban
- 11 Nissan – Rabbi Eliyahu Pardess, Av Beit Din Yerushalayim
- 12 Nissan – Rabbi Aryeh Leib, Av Beit Din Slutzk
- 12 Nissan – Rabbi Yehuda Papo
- 13 Nissan – Rabbi Yosef Caro, Maran the Beit Yosef
- 13 Nissan – Rabbi Moshe Alshich, the Alshich Hakadosh
- 14 Nissan – Rabbi Ezra Hodaya, author of *Responsa Nachlat Ezra*
- 14 Nissan – Rabbi Avraham Yaffan, Rosh Yeshiva Novhardok
- 14 Nissan – Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Dunner, Av Beit Din London





## WORDS OF THE SAGES

### The Wise Inherit Honor

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

These plants, carefully selected by Hashem, the Midrash explains, are a lesson to the *metzora* who, due to feelings of conceit, sent spears with his tongue and caused friction between friends and strife between husband and wife. “How can he rectify his ways and be healed? He should lower himself from his pride like a crimson thread (wool dyed with pigment made from a lowly creature) and hyssop (a lowly bush).”

Throughout their lives, Gedolei Yisrael try to flee from pride and honor, from these shameful traits that consume every good part of a striving person’s beautiful soul. However, they earned the designation of Chazal’s statement, “Anyone who flees from honor, will be pursued by honor,” as the multitudes who recognized their greatness and humility accorded them great honor.

The following story is related about the Chief Rabbi of Tunis, Rabbi Yitzchak Tayeb zt”l, who never sought glory. He immersed himself in Torah study, hidden away in a corner, unknown to all. One day he went to a certain *beit kneset* and after the prayers, perused one of the *sefarim*. One of the congregants, a rich man with a subtle sense of discernment, noticed this young man. He immediately realized from the way the man was delving into the text, that here was someone virtuous. He approached and inquired as to his identity. They began speaking and the conversation led to questions about the man’s financial state; Rabbi Yitzchak revealed that he was an orphan, barely able to support himself. The compassionate wealthy man immediately extended patronage over him, brought him to his house and provided for all his needs, on condition he would continue his diligent study of Torah. Since then, even from the eyes of the few who on occasion saw Rabbi Yitzchak, he disappeared. He secluded himself day and night in the rich man’s attic and engaged in Torah.

Then came the event that brought his true nature to light. On Erev Pesach of that year, an animal was slaughtered for the *chag* at the rich man’s house, and water was found in its brain. The man’s wife, who was busy preparing for the *chag*, asked the young man who stayed in their house if he could find a leniency to permit eating the animal. After perusing the different halachic authorities, he indeed proclaimed the animal could be eaten.

During the *chag*, the wealthy man visited his Rav and by the way related the incident that had occurred in his house. The Rav, who was careful to maintain his authority as Rav of the city, objected to the fact that the question was not presented to him, and immediately ordered the young man who dared to decide the halacha, to be brought before him. “You are the one who ruled the animal is permitted?” he asked sternly. “Yes,” replied the young man.

“By virtue of what did you decide to permit it?” the Rav continued to investigate. Rabbi Yitzchak did not hesitate and took out a thick notebook, in which all aspects of the question were written with amazing proficiency and in-depth study. The Rav took a look and was amazed. He kissed him on the head and said: “From today on, your name will no longer be “Yitzchak Tayeb”, but “Hagaon Rabbi Yitzchak Tayeb”.

He was later appointed Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community of Tunis. Despite his status, under no circumstances would he agree to wear the customary “Rabbinical cloak”. However, after much persuasion he eventually consented to the community’s request, for the sake of their honor and out of respect for the esteem accorded to him due to the honor of the Torah.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

### Determined Not to Destroy

When I was living in Eretz Yisrael, I was approached by a girl from France who had been living with relatives in Eretz Yisrael. She had made great strides in her level of religious observance and *yirat Shamayim*.

The girl was terribly homesick for her family who lived a secular lifestyle, and asked me whether she should spend the *chagim* with her family in France, or preserve her spirituality by remaining in Eretz Yisrael.

I was acquainted with this girl and her family. I therefore understood that were she to return at this point, all of her spiritual accomplishments would be undermined. There were a lot of things going on in her parents’ environment which were unsuitable for a fine Jewish girl. I therefore advised her to remain in Eretz Yisrael and spend the *chagim* with her relatives in Yerushalayim.

She accepted my words and informed her family of her decision. Since they too missed her greatly, they decided to travel to Eretz Yisrael and spend the *chagim* with her on sacred shores. They made arrangements to stay in Herzeliya, a city with very few religious Jews, and asked her to join them.

Unfortunately, this precious young girl who had flourished in the fertile sands of the Holy Land was unable to withstand the challenges she faced in Herzeliya. Instead of thriving during this inspiring season of the *chagim*, she withered away in the company of her wayward family and lost out spiritually from this fateful visit.

It is very easy to spoil that which has been laboriously built, and very difficult to repair what is destroyed in the blink of an eye. This story is an example of how only a short stay in a place of impurity is enough to easily destroy worlds built with purity.



## FROM THE TREASURY

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

### Practical Lesson from Tzara'at Afflictions

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

There is a famous statement from Chazal that the word מצורע alludes to מוציא רע, one who speaks negatively about others. This alludes to the fact that *tzara'at* is a punishment for the sin of lashon hara.

If we consider the matter further, we find that in fact the idea of *tzara'at* is to bring suffering upon man (see *Berachot* 5b where we are told that *tzara'at* afflictions serve as an atonement, similar to the Mizbeach that atoned). This suffering actually removes the evil (מוציא רע) from man, for through the suffering he is purified and cleansed from all his iniquities.

This is why the matter of *tzara'at* follows the section of “When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male... On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.” The juxtaposition teaches us that just as the act of circumcision connects the baby to the covenant of Avraham Avinu, so the suffering and pain that are a result of *tzara'at*, eradicate the evil from the person and reconnect him to Hashem. Since suffering is for man's benefit alone, he should not resent it.

The Mashgiach of Ponivezh, Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler zt”l, used to point out that *tzara'at* comes gradually, not suddenly or all at once. It begins with an appearance on the house, which is somewhat removed from man's actual self, but he requires the house to protect him from the cold and heat. If this does not make the person realize he sinned, he will find *tzara'at* on his clothing, which is already closer to the person. If he still does not repent, it afflicts his body which is closest to him. Here we find an important moral. Rather than grow accustomed to suffering, it should lead us to contemplation and an awareness of the message Hashem is trying to impart.

The various stages of affliction should bring a person to reflect on his deeds and rectify his ways. If he indeed utilizes the opportunity to repent, he will merit purifying himself and drawing ever closer to Hashem.

## THE SABBATICAL YEAR



1. Herbs and spices, intended for seasoning and not eaten on their own, must nevertheless be treated with *kedushat shevi'it*.
  2. If a spice with *kedushat shevi'it* is used to flavor tea or a certain dish, once it loses its capacity to flavor it may be thrown into the garbage.
  3. If fragrant plants still have a scent but one no longer wishes to benefit from them, one may be lenient and throw them into the garbage even before they spoil, since it is questionable whether they have *kedushat shevi'it*. If their scent has worn off, they may certainly be thrown away as usual.
  4. Flowers planted for ornamental purposes, whether or not they have a pleasant fragrance, do not have *kedushat shevi'it*. (However, one may not plant them during Shemittah.)
  5. If spices are planted for their smell and not for ornamental purposes, some say they have *kedushat shevi'it*. According to this opinion, one must be careful that they are not thrown away when distributing them on Motza'ei Shabbat or at a *brit milah*. However, if in doubt as to when *chanatah* – a third of its expected growth – took place, or they were sold to a gentile, there is no need to be careful. Others are of the opinion that even spices planted specifically for their smell do not have *kedushat shevi'it*.
  6. During Shemittah one may spray fragrant waters made from a mixture of herbs or roses around the house, since they are grown for their smell and not to be eaten.
  7. Tobacco which reaches *chanata* during Shemittah does not have *kedushat shevi'it*. In any case, most of the tobacco today is purchased from land owned by non-Jews; therefore *kedushat shevi'it* does not apply.
  8. Cotton wool does not have *kedushat shevi'it*. Honey extracted from citrus flowers does not have *kedushat shevi'it*, nor does *bi'ur* apply.
- For any questions in practical application of these halachot, please consult a rabbinical authority.*



## The Gaon Rabbi Shalom Mashash zt"l

A great light shone in the house of Rabbi Maimon Mashash in Meknes, Morocco, on the 22nd of Shivat 5669, with the birth of his child Shalom, named after his late grandfather. Already in his childhood he showed signs of greatness and a strong thirst for Torah study.

Rabbi Yitzchak Asbag zt"l was his foremost Rav, but he also studied Torah from his father and in the yeshivot of Meknes. He testified about himself: "Throughout my youth I did not know what a coin looked like. In my eyes all money was considered worthless – in comparison to my longing to study the Holy Torah."

Chacham Mashash was in close contact with King Hassan II, who was friendly to the Jews, and later with his son Muhammad VI. Particularly well-known was King Hassan's strong affection for the Rav. At events in the royal palace when the Rav would bless him, the king would lower his head. Chacham Mashash continued

praying for the king's well-being even after immigrating to Eretz Yisrael in 5738. On his arrival, he was appointed Chief Rabbi and head of the *batei din* in Yerushalayim.

During the twenty-five years in which he served in this position, Chacham Mashash was an example of one who pursued peace. He stayed far away from strife and invested much effort, successfully, in being accepted by all sectors in Eretz Yisrael and beyond, demonstrating unity and love to one and all.

A wonderful story which testifies to his devotion and love for the Creator, was related by his disciples. One day, while serving as Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim, he deftly descended the steps of his house. When he reached the ground floor, he remembered he had forgotten his walking stick, and wanted to go back up to his house to fetch it. His assistant volunteered to fetch it but first asked, "Honorable Rav, why do you need a stick if you managed to go down the stairs without any difficulty? I also noticed the Rav often places the stick over his arm and does not use it at all?!"

Rabbi Shalom Mashash replied: "When I was young, a severe typhus epidemic broke out in the city and many of my friends succumbed. I too fell ill and almost passed away. My fever rose greatly and I was on the verge of collapse. If not for my family who united in prayer on my behalf, and the best doctors who treated me thanks to my family's concern, I would have already passed on to the World of Truth.

"That difficult night in which I hallucinated, I dreamed I was cured of the disease. Indeed the next day I was treated with an experimental drug and began to recover.

"During my recovery from the disease, I needed a cane for a while. The cane

reminds me of the fact that I was saved, while my many friends did not merit recovering. When I recovered from the illness, I accepted upon myself to take the stick with me wherever I go, so I should remain thankful to Hashem at all times."

Since we are approaching the festival of Pesach, we will mention here a jewel from his remarks on this timely topic:

"One of the precious mitzvot of Pesach is the commandment of charity. It is not fitting for man to take care of all his own and his household's needs, while disregarding the needs of the destitute, for the expenses involved in the *chag* are numerous.

"Chazal instructed us to collect *Kimcha DePischa*, and this is also how we begin the Haggadah, 'Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat.'

"The holy Zohar tells us that on the night of the *chag* Hashem visits all His creations, and when He sees they are lacking, He wants to destroy His world. The Attribute of Judgement accuses the rich and says to Hashem, 'You gave the rich enough to be satisfied and leave over, but to the poor You did not give anything. Where is Your compassion?'

"This causes Hashem pain and He wants to pour out His anger. What caused this? The one who did not give charity. If he gives charity, he makes peace in the Heavenly entourage and about him it is said: 'If [Yisrael] would grasp My stronghold, then he would make peace with Me; peace would he make with Me.'"

Rabbi Shalom Mashash zt"l served as Rav of Yerushalayim for twenty-five years, until his passing on the tenth of Nissan, at the age of 94. His memory was honored greatly with various initiatives.

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