

# PACHAD DAVID

Tazria Metzora



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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita

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**"This shall be the law of the person afflicted with tzara'at" (Vayikra 14:2).**

In this Parshah we read about the issue of *tzara'at*. The *Siftei Chachamim* brings (Vayikra 13:46) that the word *tzara'at* denotes "*motzi ra*" (slander). Rashi cites the Gemara (*Arachin* 16b), "Wherein is the leper different that the Torah said, 'He shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be?' For he separated a husband from his wife, a man from his neighbor. Therefore said the Torah, 'He shall dwell alone.'" We find that anyone who spoke *lashon hara* was stricken like Miriam, and like many others. It is surprising why Chava was not stricken with *tzara'at*, since the Serpent spoke derogatorily about Hashem when it said (*Bereishit* 3:5) "For G-d knows that on the day that you eat thereof your eyes will be opened, and you will be like angels, knowing good and evil." Rashi explains the Serpent's argument: "Every craftsman hates his fellow craftsmen. He [G-d] ate of the tree and created the world." Chava repeated this to Adam and thereby spoke *lashon hara*, so why was she not stricken?

Let us first of all examine the magnitude of the punishment of *tzara'at*. The Gemara states (*Nedarim* 64b), "Four are accounted as dead: A poor man, a leper, a blind person, and one who is childless."

This requires explanation. It is logical that a poor man, a blind man and one who is childless are considered as dead, but why is the leper considered as dead? He has children and money and sees like anyone else. It seems like he can enjoy life, so what is he lacking that he is considered as dead?

The reason is because the *Shechinah* departs from the leper and he becomes excommunicated. He disconnects from Hashem Who is the source of life, and Hashem distances him, decreeing upon him as it is written (Vayikra 13:46), "He shall dwell isolated; his dwelling shall be outside the camp." The message Hashem transmits to the leper is, "I want nothing to do with you!" Thus, being considered as dead has nothing to do with how many possessions one has.

From here we see the severity of *lashon hara*. It may seem to us as a minor offense, but the consequences are devastating. Let me tell you about an incident that

## maskil Le'David

### Lashon Hara Causes Dissent and Dispute



shocked me. When I was in New York, an acquaintance whom I know for many years came to me and told me, "I have come to say goodbye to you because I do not know if I will see you again."

I was taken aback by his words and asked him why he said that. He confided that the doctors had just diagnosed him with advanced stage cancer and they did not give him more than a few weeks or months to live. I told him that

he must have hope to merit speedy salvation, and he should not despair from Hashem's Mercy. But he persisted that he felt his end was near, and he just begged me to pray for him.

His request gave me no rest. He asked me to pray for him that Hashem should have mercy on him and not remember all the sins he committed. Then he began to cry and confessed, "Woe to me, what shame awaits me there!"

I was astonished to hear him utter these words, because in fact these are the words the Vilna Gaon uses when he explains that Gehinom is dreadful, devastating shame which a person feels on the Day of Judgment! I asked him why he had not done *teshuvah* before, many years ago. But he had no answer...

We know the answer. The answer is because a person who is immersed in the vanities of This World does not see the truth. The appealing material attractions blind him. He sees only honor, beauty, and money, and this misleads him from truth. But when he faces death, he begins to see the truth, as is stated, "There is no ruling on the day of death."

This lesson is alluded to in the punishment of *tzara'at*. The leper is considered as dead when he sits in isolation without another soul around, and this arouses him to the reckoning that one day he will lie alone in the grave.

In addition, the holy *sefarim* state that the prayers of a slanderer do not rise to Heaven, because the slander creates a barrier which separates him from Hashem. Thus he prays only to the trees and stones, which is like worshipping idols, and his prayers go to the powers of impurity, G-d forbid! For all this he will have to give accounting. This teaches us about the dreadful damage of *lashon hara*.

1 Iyar 5783  
22 April 2023

1004



## Hilula

- 1 Iyar – Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, Rosh Yeshiva Be'er Yaakov
- 2 Iyar – Rabbi Yakov Yosef
- 3 Iyar – Rabbi Aryeh Leib Tzintz, author of *Meloh Ha'Omer*
- 4 Iyar – Rabbi Yosef Te'omim, author of *Pri Megadim*
- 5 Iyar – Rabbi Noach Shimonowitz
- 6 Iyar – Rabbi Refael Levine
- 7 Iyar – Rabbi Shlomoh Ephraim Lintchech, author of *Kli Yakar*



## WORDS OF THE SAGES



### When Zeros Turn into Millions

**“This shall be the law of the person afflicted with tzara’at, on the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the Kohen” (Vayikra 14:2).**

In the sefer *Roshi BaShamayim* this verse is explained in a mystical manner according to what is stated in the Zohar (*Parshat Pikudei*), that when a person prays without concentrating on what he is saying, or when he learns Torah not for the sake of Heaven, the merits of the prayer and Torah are preserved in a special section Above. The next time he prays with concentration or learns Torah for the sake of Heaven, with this power the improper prayers and Torah study are then taken from the section where they were preserved and elevated to the Heavenly Throne.

An allusion to this can be found in the words of the verse, *“Zot tihyeh Torat hametzorah* – (lit. This shall be the Torah of the person who speaks badly), implying that this will serve to repair the Torah learned not for the sake of Heaven and the improper prayer; *“beyom teharato”* (on the day of his cleansing), which refers to the day when he learns Torah and prays properly, then *“he shall be brought to the Kohen,”* which signifies that his prayers and Torah study will be brought before the Heavenly Throne, bringing pleasure to Hashem...

The story is told about a Chortkover *chassid* who was a son-in-law of a prominent, well-to-do and G-d fearing merchant. One day this *chassid* came to the home of the Admor of Chortkov, *zy”a*, and told him, “Honorable Rebbe, unfortunately I have to tell the Rebbe that my father-in-law does not pray...”

The Rebbe replied, “Excuse me for asking, but what time do you pray?”

The *chassid* answered, “Late in the morning.”

“Apparently your father-in-law prays on time,” the Rebbe told him...

But the *chassid* persisted that he was convinced his father-in-law did not pray at all. So the Rebbe asked him to follow his father-in-law and only when it was clear to him that he definitely did not pray, he should tell him that the Rebbe was calling him. Indeed, after a few days of following him, the *chassid* told his father-in-law that the Rebbe was calling him.

The father-in-law turned white and with great trepidation went to the Rebbe’s house to find out why the Rebbe was calling him.

The Rebbe told him, “I heard you do not pray.”

“That is right,” answered the man.

“How could that be? Why not?” The Rebbe inquired.

The man explained, “I am not a great Torah scholar, but I have one virtue: I am a man of truth and meticulous about speaking only the truth. Since I cannot concentrate properly during prayers, I do not want to speak untruthfully what I don’t mean, so I do not pray.”

The Rebbe replied, “It is stated in Tehillim (87:6), ‘[When] the L-rd counts in the script of the Nations...’ This can be explained in the following way:

“A Jew comes to the *beit kneset* and prays without concentrating properly. Can Hashem record that he prayed this prayer? Certainly not! It is not considered prayer. Therefore, Hashem records a zero in the man’s files.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

### How Can One Truly Thank Hashem?

The following is a story told to me personally by Mr. Shukrun, a G-d fearing Jew, from which we can learn how simple faith in Hashem can bring a person great salvation. It was already more than three years that he was searching to buy an apartment. His wife was anxious and constantly pressured him, complaining that he did not make enough effort to pursue every lead to apartments for sale.

This story took place on Purim 2011. When Mr. Shukrun saw that his wife would not stop nagging, he turned to her and said, “As you know, Purim is a day when the Jews enjoyed ‘light and gladness,’ and each year on this day the Gates of Heaven open again and the merits of Am Yisrael are recalled...”

She stopped her badgering for a moment but did not really comprehend what he was getting at. “What does this have to do with an apartment?” He said, “I can at this opportune moment affirm with certainty that Hashem will assist us, and by this evening we will find the apartment we are looking for.”

Mr. Shukrun went on to tell me excitedly what happened. “After I concluded my words, I went down the steps of the building, and suddenly I noticed a stranger who turned to ask me if this was such and such street. I answered in the affirmative. Then he continued and asked, “Where is apartment number so and so?”

The apartment was located right below the apartment I rented, and I showed him the place he was looking for. Then he told me, “This apartment belongs to me, and I have not visited the place for a long time. I put this apartment up for sale many months ago, but I have not yet found a buyer...”

I realized immediately that this was Divinely orchestrated by Hashem, and my prayers had borne fruit. I asked him for some details about the sale, the size of the apartment, and the price he was asking for. After a mere two hours, we found ourselves sitting with an attorney and finalizing the purchase...

When my wife heard what happened, still amazed at the obvious Divine Providence, she asked me, “But what about parking spaces? Is it included in the price?” Before she finished her words, the phone rang and it was the owner of the apartment. “We forgot to add the two parking spaces around the house in the contract, but of course it is included in the price.”

When I heard this amazing story, I could not help but be moved by the extraordinary Divine Providence he experienced. I turned to him and asked, “And what did you offer as thanksgiving to Hashem for His great kindness to you?”

Mr. Shukrun responded with conviction, “I decided to add two hours to my fixed times of Torah study each day.” I was very pleased with his answer and said, “You are most fortunate to have merited this. And this is truly the right way to thank Hashem for His endless Kindness. It is not sufficient to prepare a feast of thanksgiving, as most people usually do, but the most important thing Hashem wants is to strengthen oneself in Torah and mitzvot and draw closer to Him and His Torah.

This is a tangible example of the power of a Jew who through his simple faith can connect with Hashem, and thus Hashem fulfills his desires and answers his pleas. As we previously explained, this perfect faith is ingrained in every Jew through the mitzvah of Brit Milah, which instills in him unquestioning faith and devotion in the service of Hashem.



## FROM THE TREASURY

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

### A Shameful Reminder for Life

**“And it shall be, on the seventh day, that he shall shave off all his hair: [that of] his head, his beard, his eyebrows; indeed, all his hair he shall shave off” (Vayikra 14:9).**

What is the cure for the leper, and how does he cleanse himself of his impurity?

The Torah states that after the affliction of *tzara'at* is cured, the Kohen takes two birds, a cedar stick, a strip of crimson [wool] and a hyssop. Then he slaughters one bird and dips everything into its blood over the spring water, etc, and he sprinkles seven times upon the person being cleansed from *tzara'at*. Then he sends away the live bird. The person being cleansed then immerses his garments, shaves off all his hair, and immerses himself in water and becomes clean, as it is stated, “And it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave off all his hair: [that of] his head, his beard, his eyebrows; indeed, all his hair, he shall shave off.”

This requires clarification. If the Torah would command the leper to shave off all his hair when the affliction of *tzara'at* is still plaguing him, then we would understand that this procedure was necessary for his cure. But after the leper is cured from his *tzara'at* and he is entirely healthy, why does he then have to remove all his hair? There is nothing more humiliating than this. Imagine a person who has hair and a long beard and suddenly becomes completely bald! His face is distorted beyond recognition without his beard, side locks and eyebrows. Certainly he would be ashamed to leave his house, and he would be traumatized for life. So what is the point of shaving all the hair?

It seems to me that this teaches us how stringent the Torah is about the prohibition of *lashon hara*. The sin of the gossiper is too great to bear. The main damage is caused by his mouth, and when the mouth becomes defiled by forbidden words of *lashon hara* and *rechilus*, the prayers recited through that mouth are not accepted Above. The Torah studied through that mouth is also flawed and not worthy and cannot purify his soul and sanctify him. Thus, from then on his spiritual advancement is stunted, because he no longer has the necessary tools to grow.

Since the leper damaged his mouth and defiled it with forbidden speech, and henceforth, even if he would engage his mouth with the study of Torah, his mouth is defiled and unworthy and his prayers would not be accepted Above. He must be aware that the leprosy came to him because he used his mouth to slander his fellow and defiled his tongue with forbidden words of *lashon hara* and *rechilus*.

In order to remember the enormity of his sin for the rest of his life, the Torah commanded him to do something degrading and shave off all the hairs of his body. Certainly this shame will make a deep impression in his soul that he will never forget. In this way he will always remember the severity of his sin and will henceforth guard himself from repeating his evil behavior.

## CHAZAK U'BARUCH



The sanctity of guarding one's eyes is one of the loftiest ways of serving Hashem, and we are warned about it in the Torah (*Bamidbar* 15:39), “You shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes after which you are going astray.”

Usually people attribute the reason for the prohibition of viewing forbidden sights as eventually leading to transgressing an actual offense. This is not absolutely true, because the very forbidden sight causes damage, besides what the person might do as a result.

There is an account of Rabbi Matia ben Charash who sat in the Beit Midrash studying Torah. His face shone like the sun, and he never lifted his eyes to look at a woman. Once, the Satan passed by and became jealous of him. He asked, “Could it be that he never sinned?” He then asked Hashem for permission to entice him to sin. Hashem said he would never succeed, but gave him permission to try.

The Satan stood before Rabbi Matia, disguised as the most beautiful woman, like from the days of Na'ama, the sister of Tuval Kayin, who the Hosting Angels sinned with, as it is stated (*Bereishit* 6:2), “The sons of Elokim saw that the daughters of man were good and they took themselves wives from whomever they chose.”

Rabbi Matia saw her and turned away. The Satan placed himself in his line of vision, and Rabbi Matia, once again, averted his gaze from her. The Satan didn't give up and stood before him in all different positions, until Rabbi Matia cried out, “I am afraid that my Yetzer Hara will get the better of me and cause me to sin.” He immediately called for his attendant and asked for a fire and nails. Rabbi Matia heated up the nails and poked out his eyes with them. Upon seeing this, the Satan fell back defeated.

Hashem instructed the angel, Refael, to heal Rabbi Matia. But Rabbi Matia refused to be healed. He told the angel, “Leave me alone. Whatever was, was.” The angel took his words up to Heaven. Then Hashem told the angel, “Go and tell Rabbi Matia that I guarantee the Yetzer Hara will have no control over him.” He was immediately healed. From here, Chazal teach that one who doesn't gaze at women is liberated from the Yetzer Hara. These are the words of the Midrash.

Let us contemplate the lesson we learn from Rabbi Matia ben Charash. He understood that it was preferable to blind his eyes than to view forbidden sights. With extraordinary conviction he blinded his eyes. He was prepared to suffer all this pain so he would not transgress the prohibition of viewing forbidden sights. He knew the suffering he could experience afterward in the World of Truth would be much greater. But even more than that, he understood that it is not worth having eyes if he would use them to sin. He was prepared to lose his whole life so as not to transgress even once the prohibition of viewing forbidden sights.

Rabbi Matia ben Charash understood that the world is not a free for all. It is not possible to look at whatever one desires and afterward continue life as usual. It is preferable to be blind, which is considered as being dead, or lose one's sight entirely, in order not to sin with his eyes.

The lesson Rabbi Matia taught is incredible: One's eyes do not belong to him. Eyes were given to us to be used in the right way, and when the correct purpose cannot be fulfilled, there is no longer any need for eyes.



## Men of Faith

### Hitting the Nail on the Head

Mr. Nachmani worked in the ports of Morocco and earned a profitable income. One day, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan met him in the street and asked him to contribute a specific amount of money for *tzedakah*. He told the Rav he did not have the money. The Rav repeated his request and told him, "How can you insist that you do not have the money when you have the exact sum in your pocket?"

Mr. Nachmani shamefacedly took out of his pocket the sum the tzaddik requested and gave it to him.

Then, Rabbi Chaim warned him, "Your job is in the port. When you go to work, beware! Several Arabs in the port will throw rocks at you, attempting to kill you. The stones will fall near you, but none will hit you."

Rabbi Chaim continued to give him precise instructions.

"Leave your job in the port and go out in the street. Take the first job offer you receive."

That is exactly what happened. After his miraculous escape at the port, Mr. Nachmani went out in the street and met a gentile, who offered him a job.

"I have a storage room full of nails. I must empty it within the next few days, since someone wants to rent it empty of all contents. You can buy all the nails from me, if you want."

Mr. Nachmani was surprised by this unusual offer. "Why should I pay you for the nails which I will empty from your storage room? You should pay me, since I will be removing them. What can I do with such a huge quantity of nails, anyway?"

The gentile thought a bit and then told Mr. Nachmani, "Okay, tell me how much you want to get paid for emptying the storage room."

Mr. Nachmani named a sum of money, which the gentile agreed to pay. Mr. Nachmani proceeded to empty the storage room, and he took the nails to his house.

At home, Mr. Nachmani inspected the nails and noticed they were produced by a well-known company. He hurried over to the local shoemaker and asked him, "How much are these brand name nails worth?" The shoemaker was taken aback and exclaimed, "Nails from this company are scarce! If you possess such nails, I will buy your entire stock." The shoemaker signed a contract with Mr. Nachmani on the spot. He paid for the entire stock of nails, and Mr. Nachmani received a huge amount of money.

Mr. Nachmani, who was only sixteen years old at the time, went home and showed his father all the money he had received.

"Where did you get all this money from?" his father asked him.

Mr. Nachmani told his father the whole story, beginning with his encounter with Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, and how in the end he had earned a huge sum of money. When his father heard the amazing account, he told his son, "Let us go to Rabbi Chaim Pinto, since the money really belongs to him."

When the two arrived at the tzaddik's house, even before crossing the threshold, Rabbi Chaim called to them, "Come in."

The father went in and declared, "Rabbi, all the money here belongs to you."

Rabbi Chaim answered, "Take all the money, since I already took from your son the sum I needed for *tzedakah*..."

cont. from p. 2 >>>

"One zero and another zero join each other, until there is a long line of three hundred and sixty-four zeros as many as the days of the year..."

"But then one day comes when that Jew manages to sanctify himself and he prays wholeheartedly with proper concentration. Then Hashem records a number one in his file. However, if He writes the number one on the right side of the page, then it remains only one. But if He puts the number one on the left side, then the number one is followed by all the three hundred and sixty-four zeros, which amount to an astronomic sum..."

"All the nations write from left to right, while the Jewish people write from right to left. So this is the explanation of the verse: Hashem 'counts in the script of the nations,' and writes the number one on the left side. Thus, at once the entire row of zeros becomes meaningful and acquires a value of millions... That one prayer recited with proper concentration as if 'gives birth' to all the prayers so that they become meaningful."

"Therefore," the Rebbe instructed the father-in-law, "you must fulfill your duty. You should answer Amen to all blessings, and try to concentrate properly when saying Amen. But, be aware, that even if you do not always succeed, the improper prayer will one day turn meaningful, since it is preserved and waits until you manage to concentrate properly during one prayer, making the sum total of all your prayers worth millions..."

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