

THE  
SWEETNESS OF PESACHמתיקות השבת  
והפסח

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Based on the lectures of the Rosh Yeshiva, **Hagoon Harav Menachem Boruch Yaveh shlit"u** talmid of Posek Hador Harav Shmuel Vosner ztz"l

## THE CURE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAS BEEN FOUND...

We are now going through very difficult times, a situation the world hasn't seen for many years. And it is upon us to inquire and try to understand as much as possible, what Hashem wants of us, and why He has brought this challenge on us.

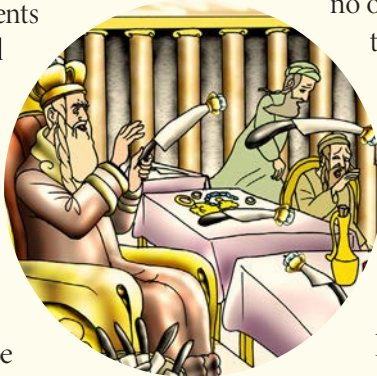
**A MASHAL – The King Gives a Collective Punishment...**

We will begin with a *mashal*: A powerful and mighty king had fought and conquered many countries, which he then populated with all his ministers and subjects to live there. He gave them lots of presents and took care of all their needs for many years. As the years passed, the young generation stopped appreciating his gifts, and thinking they would gain if they neglected the king's authority, they all rebelled against him, each in his own way: There were those that outwardly kept serving the king but lost their appreciation for him, while others rebelled openly and performed crimes.

The disappointed king, therefore, decided to punish them all, each in his own way: Some were put in jail, while others were put in house arrest, and others were expelled from the country. However, these punishments brought them to be very mistaken in understanding the message the king was trying to send them – they justified themselves and blamed only the others,

proving it by the harsher sentence that the other suffered. Thus, nobody was willing to admit to his misdeeds.

This made the king even more upset, and so he decided to send out to the streets special dogs, trained to squirt out of their mouths a unique poison that stinks very badly and might even kill. They roamed the streets harming the passerby, staining their clothes, and even killing some of them. The king had intentionally brought this kind of punishment on the people – in the same way for everybody – so that no one would be able to say that it is the other's fault.

**The Present Makes the King Angrier...**

Upon seeing the situation, some of the people assumed the king was an unpleasant and strict person, thus they decided to try to appease him with a present, so that his fury would subside, and he would calm down. Yet, when the king saw them approaching with the present, his anger only grew bigger – is it not enough that they have forgotten his kindness toward them and started rebelling against him, that now they think of him as an angry person, attempting to appease him with their presents?! He immediately threw them out and sent even more dogs to attack them.

The frightened crowd dispersed at once, locking themselves up in their homes in fear, sorry for their bad

**MY STORY!****Endangering Life to Gain Kimcha D'Pischa...**

Every year before Pesach I go around collecting *kimcha d'Pischa* – support of necessities and money for Pesach – from as many organizations as I can, which earns me much needed help. This year that the corona virus has affected many plans in the world, also many *kimcha d'Pischa* organizations were disrupted because of it, but I insisted not to lose any of them.

One of the organizations that endorsed me for their support, warned me not to bring anyone else along. Although, I admit that I do not tend to tell people of the organizations that I get from, so it shouldn't be overcrowded and be divided between more people and I would lose a little portion, however I do bring my brother along with me in my car, to help me with the groceries. This time, too, I brought him along despite the warnings.

When we arrived at the place, we saw that it was crowded much past the permitted gathering restrictions, despite the warnings of the *gedolei Yisrael* to be careful with *מִנְיַן מְדוּבָר* "מִנְיַן מְדוּבָר" – to take great measures of precaution not to be infected and not to infect others.

My brother immediately told me he does not want to stay in the area, even if it means losing some money. Life is more important than money, he said. However, I insisted that

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behavior and ungratefulness to the decent king. At home, they all examined their wrongdoings and tried to demonstrate their appreciation for the king in every possible way: One made a fancy piece of jewelry in honor of the king, another prepared for him a beautiful tray of fruit, and so on...

The kindhearted king sent messengers to deliver food and basic necessities for the people locked up in their homes and for their families, and he ordered them to observe and report to him the regret of the people and their growing loyalty to him. When the king heard how the people were talking all day of his greatness and kindness, he was very pleased and ordered his servants to line up big tables at the town center, fill them up with all the best delicacies, and he called all his subjects out to the streets to celebrate.

### THE NIMSHAL – Hashem Calls Out to Us...

Hashem has brought upon us this plague, the corona virus, which made all the governments of the world stop our learning and *davening*, close our *shuls*, and shut down all *yeshivos*, *kollelim* and *mikvaos*, which is certainly Hashem's hand alone. Though we cannot attempt to understand Hashem's ways, yet we ought to try and fathom as much as we can what this wrath is all about, for *"Is Hakadosh Baruch Hu suspected that He enforces punishment without justice?!"* (Brachos 5d).

Now, if we examine our lives, we will find that Hashem gave us a healthy body and has kept us healthy for many years,

showering us with kindnesses with no end, giving us a life with lots of plenty and no shortage. Nevertheless, we have been ungrateful all the time, and have forgotten of the One Who supplies us with all our needs.

### Hashem Doesn't Want Our Torah Learning...?!

Hashem sees all our learning and *davening*, and *"He who examines our hearts and minds"* recognizes that all the Torah we learn, the three prayers we *daven* every day, and the rest of the *mitzvos* we keep and fulfill, are not for His sake but only for our own benefit. We do it all merely for the respect it will bring us, or in order to ease our conscience. After fighting with others all day long and talking bad about them, (especially those that are busy all day contaminating their eyes and minds with the filthy technology) – we are then careful with *tefillah b'tzibur* and other *mitzvos* only in order to feel good with ourselves.

Keeping *mitzvos* in such a way upsets Hashem, and therefore He rebuked us, *"כַּפְּיוֹ וּבִשְׂפָתָיו כִּבְדוּנֵי וְלִבּוֹ רַחֵק מִמֶּנִּי"*, *"With their mouths and their lips they have honored Me, yet they have distanced their hearts from me."* One's *davening* and learning is only by rote and for his own benefit – in order to gain more knowledge and be respected by others, and he has no intention to acquire more awareness of Hashem and His kindness through the Torah, and to learn His good ways and improve his own character traits.

### THE BITTERNESS OF THE KING'S WRATH...

The king sends dogs with a unique poison, to go wild on the streets and squirt their special poison on the passerby. One person dies from it, another's clothing gets badly stained, and it makes another stink terribly.



Why has the king brought this punishment on his subjects?

Why were the people affected each in his own way, while the punishment was given to all of them in the same way?

And how is this connected to what is going on in the world now?

Read all about it in the article above.



## Who Is To Blame?

Therefore, in an attempt to awaken the people, in ordinary times, Hashem punishes the people in different ways, each one according to his deed: One loses in business, another gets sick and is bound to bed, while another dies from his illness, G-d forbid. However, this still is not enough to make us repent, since everybody blames it all on others and other communities, claiming that they were the ones to cause the *middas hadin*, which is why they suffered a harsher tragedy.

Thus, Hashem decided these days to send the nations of the world, that are despised like dogs, to cause with their disgusting eating habits this terrible disease of the corona virus. This virus Hashem brought on everyone in the same way – so that nobody will be able to say that it is another's fault – only that it affects each person in another way: Some have a mild sickness, while others have to stay in quarantine, and others even die from it.

## Hashem Is 'Kicking' Us Out of Shul...

Now we can understand well what Hashem is blaming us for by closing our *batei midrash* – that we cannot keep coming as usual to learn with a big crowd and *daven* with a *minyán*, in order to appease our own conscience – because this is what caused us this misfortune. And if people gather *shul* now in an attempt to appease Hashem and calm down the wrath, it only upsets Hashem even more, because it shows that they think of Hashem as an angry and impatient G-d.

This is like when it rains on Sukkos. Chazal compared it to a servant who pours a drink for his master, which the master then takes and spills on his face, because he realizes that the servant is unfaithful and only tries to show himself off as a loyal servant. So too, when it rains on Sukkos, Hashem shows that He is not interested in our *mitzvah*, because He realizes that we fulfill it only by rote, with no intentions of gratitude for the house that He gives us all year round. And a person who stays in the *sukkah* anyhow, is called a *hedyot*.

It is brought in *sefer Etz Chaim (hakdama)* it the name of the Arizal, that the reason for the terrible decrees upon us is because of the *yeshivos* that learn Torah not *lishmah* but for knowledge and pride alone, which is considered in Hashem's eyes like the tower built by *Dor Hahaflaga* in an attempt to fight against Hashem! G-d forbid.

## Hashem Is Not Interested In Korbanos...?!

Yeshaya HaNavi stood up and called out in the name of Hashem: "מִי בִקֵּשׁ זֹאת מִיְדֵיכֶם רָמַס הַצִּירִי", "When you come to appear before Me [with offerings], who sought this from your hand, to trample My courtyards?" The crowd wondered and were insulted, how dare he say Hashem is not interested in our offerings, when the Torah brings with great length [in recent *parshahs*] instructions about all the offerings and how to bring them before Hashem?! Thus, the

Gemara says that the people sought to conceal *sefer Koheles* and *Yechezkel*. They sought to conceal many other *neviim*, too, for they thought the prophets contradicted the Torah.

However, Yeshaya explained to the people that Hashem wanted them to offer *korbanos* only for His sake, in a way that will bring them to love Him, and not offer *korbanos* that have a blemish. Of course, they all knew that you cannot bring an offering with a blemish as a *korban*, but he taught them that the whole point in the *korban* is to appreciate our own body that has no blemish – and learn to appreciate it through the perfectly healthy animal brought as an offering. And if the *korban* doesn't bring a person to appreciate Hashem's kindness, the entire offering is worthless and valued in Hashem's eyes no more than a *korban* full of blemishes.

## Hashem's Cruel Servant...

We find with Shaul Hamelech that he was called "בְּחִיר ה'" – "the chosen one", because he had completely perfected his ways with good character traits. However, he wasn't called "עֶבֶד ה'" – "the servant of Hashem", as David Hamelech was called, because he wasn't ready to be tough and act with cruelty when that was Hashem's will. When Shmuel Hanavi ordered him in the name of Hashem to wipe out Amalek, he could not bring himself to do it, because of his great compassion and because he was not strong enough to go against the will of the nation.

Thus, Shaul could not bring himself to fulfill Hashem's will because he was enslaved to his good character traits, and therefore Hashem chose David. As the Gemara says (Yoma 22b), "Shaul failed with one sin and it was counted against him; David failed with two sins and they were not counted against him." Hashem chose "David, My servant," because although "When he would sit and occupy himself with Torah, he would make himself humble like a worm, but when he would go out to war, he would make himself hard like a cedar tree," (Moed Katan 16b). He used all his habits to the service of Hashem, even when it meant he had to be cruel and harden his good character traits.

## Stay Home Even if There Is Dread Indoors...

These days, the *gedolei Yisrael* ruled: everybody must stay home, and avoid leaving even for prayers and learning Torah. We should follow David's wonderful ways, not to be enslaved to our habits, rather submit ourselves to Hashem's wish, and stay home to *daven* and learn together with our children. As the Gemara says (Bava Kama 60), "Once permission is granted to the destroyer to kill, it does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked. And not only that, but it begins with the righteous first."

The Gemara then continues to explain that one should "gather his feet" to stay in his house – "even though there

is dread indoors, [one should not go out, because] on the outside the sword will bereave.” This teaches us, that even if one dreads staying home – because he sees how little desire he really has for *davening* and learning when he is alone, and instead he only keeps getting into fights with family members, thus he prefers to leave and *daven* with a big crowd and not hang around his family too much. Yet, we are taught by the Gemara, that he ought to stay indoors, for outside the danger is even greater.

### Not to Put Our Trust In Hashem?!

In ordinary times, when a person learns about all the types of *nezikin*, damages, the *yetzer hara* fools him to distance him from faith in Hashem, and from learning also *masectahs* that talk about the service of Hashem. But in these days, that we have to bring the laws of *nezikin* to practice, he makes a person claim that he relies and trusts upon Hashem and does not take the right precautions. As we find in the time of Yirmiyah Hanavi, that he warned the people to fear from the upcoming troubles, while the false prophets would comfort them and strengthen them to put their trust in Hashem who will surely protect them. However, Yirmiyah knew it was no time for consolation and faith, for a terrible decree was hanging above them.

Though, surely the fear we need to have is not of the corona virus, but from Hashem's hand that is striking without differentiation. As the Pele Yoetz (*dever*) brings from the Zohar that explains the *passuk*, רָאָה רָעָה, “עָרוּם רָאָה רָעָה וְנִסְתָּר וּפְתִיּוֹם עָבְרוּ וְנִנְעָנְשׁוּ” “A clever person sees evil and hides, but fools pass on and are punished” – for the mere fact that a person walks around and does not hide, he deserves to be punished!

### David Hamelech Finds a Cure...

When there was a plague in the days of David, he taught the nation, “A person

is obligated to recite one hundred blessings every day, as it states, ‘Now, O Yisrael, what does Hashem your G-d ask of you? Only to fear Him, to go in all His ways and to love Him’ – do not read ‘mah’ (what), rather ‘meah’ (one hundred).” Certainly, David did not mean just to recite blessings out of rote, rather he wanted to teach the nation to be full of praises and gratitude to Hashem all day long for His kindnesses.

### The Time for Harvest Has Come...

Now, Hashem closed all our *batei midrash* in order to awaken us to evaluate our learning until now – to see what good we have produced from it; how much we have come closer to love Hashem and His nation. Now is not the time to come together and study the Torah, rather it is the time to acquire the forty-eight qualities with which the Torah is acquired: fear of Hashem, modesty, patience (especially towards family members), and faith in the Torah sages. To appreciate one's own portion, to love Hashem and His nation, to share in the bearing of a burden – to help out with the household and raising the children, to judge others favorably, to learn in order to teach and in order to practice, etc.

A person who never takes the time to produce these incredible qualities from his Torah learning, is compared to one who works hard to earn more and more money but does not care to get married and raise a family. His toil is completely in vain, because there is no use in all this money, and he has nobody to share and enjoy it.

May we end this *Makas Choshech* that we are all suffering from, and merit to witness *Makas Bechoros* in which the Jews observed the miraculous plague that strike only their wicked oppressors, while they were enjoying Hashem's splendor with a beautiful *Seder seudah*.

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he is just being a scaredy-cat and that there was nothing to worry about. He was convinced, and we both pushed our way in between the people to get the *kimcha d'Pischa*. We each got two hundred dollars, and turned to leave with a smile on our faces.

Outside, though, there was a man who told us and the people around us, that he knows for a fact that a man infected with the corona virus left his isolation at home to get from this *kimcha d'Pischa*. “According to the rules, you all need to enter quarantine at once, after you came in contact with this transgressor!” He concluded.

My brother got very frightened, while I just waved my hand and said, “Why are you being so afraid, you really think these few minutes made you sick?! Come on, stop imagining.” However, my brother did take it seriously and departed from me, to take the train back home to go into isolation.

A week later, the news hit me like a thunderstorm in a cloudless day – my brother was seriously sick with the corona virus, and he was rushed to the ICU on a respirator. I was tremendously sorry, for I knew it was my fault. I *davened* for him with all my heart none stop, but his condition only kept deteriorating, and he is now hanging between life and death.

I called up a great *tzaddik* this week, to ask him to *daven* for my brother – a father of five little children. When he heard what had exactly happened, he said firmly, “It turns out you were ready to kill somebody for a little gain of money!”

This conversation left my heart shattered and completely broken, so I decided to publish this story, that at least others will learn a lesson and will avoid further damage. And perhaps this will be a merit for a speedy recovery for my brother, along with all other infected Jews.

B. J. New York

## TEFILLAH TO BE SAVED FROM THE CORONAVIRUS

**R**ibono shel olam, I am so grateful to You for the wonderful body You gave me, designed with infinite wisdom, and for giving me a pure *neshama*. For so many years You have kept us alive, giving us sweet breaths, protecting us from all the germs in the air; and even when we got sick, You cured us.

And now, You have brought upon the world a terrible plague – the Coronavirus, which is like the “*king*” of all diseases [corona translates, crown], with which You are hinting to us that You are the King of the world, and all the diseases are but Your own hand, [“אֵין הַנֶּחֱשׁ מִמִּית” – the snake cannot kill, it’s the sins that kill].

However, since we did not realize this, we did not notice the crown on Your head – therefore You took it off and started hitting us with it, pushing us away, telling us “*here I am!*” saying, “קָרָאוּ נָא” [sounds like, corona] – call out to me! And, now that You are hiding Your kingship, all we can see is only Your quality that You feed all living beings with kindness, even in times of anger; and so, You brought upon us a disease that affects breathing – because we didn’t raise our eyes to You in gratitude when we were breathing healthy.

In the days of David Hamelech, You brought a plague upon the people, and it did not stop until David instituted for everyone to say a hundred blessings every day, with humility and gratitude, as the meaning of the word “בָּרוּךְ” (to kneel). We bless You with appreciation for food and drinks that You give us; for giving of Your wisdom to the righteous Torah sages – “שִׁחַלְקָם מִחֶכְמָתוֹ לִירְאָיו”, out of admiration for their pure advice and their modesty which is their true greatness. And through appreciating this, one’s Torah learning is made complete. We thank You also for creating all mankind – “בוֹרֵא נִפְשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת”, especially those that are busy providing us with means of sustenance. Only through this, were they able to stop the epidemic in the days of David.

Yet, instead of being filled with happiness for our health that You gave us with tremendous miracles, and for being the sole provider of all our needs – we complain about all the things we imagine that we are missing.

We ask of you, Hashem, please forgive us for our sins, for our ungratefulness; and from now on we want to always thank You and dance before You in gratitude for the plenty, for our health and our sweet breaths. We will also try to stop for a minute at the beginning of every hour, to praise You and call out to You, to save us from all sicknesses and troubles. Instead of sitting in quarantine from fear of the Coronavirus, we want to sit in solitude with You alone, and open our mouths in praise and appeal to You.

At this time, we beg of You, please have mercy on us, save us from this terrible epidemic, and protect Your nation from this tragedy. Keep us always isolated from all the nations of the world, separated from their bad ways and culture – “כִּי אַתָּה ה' לְבַדְדִי לְבַטַח תּוֹשִׁיבֵנִי”, “*For You, Hashem, will make me dwell solitary and secure.*” And this will give us the merit to sit in peace, with no lack in health, food or livelihood.

Have mercy on all those Jews who have already contracted this horrible disease and cure them; turn all our diseases into dance [from “מַחְלוֹת” – sicknesses, to “מְחוֹלוֹת” – dance], and may we merit to hear the sound of the *shofar* of Moshiach, and be redeemed an eternal redemption, *amein*.





