



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת a collection of maamarim on
given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Noach 5763

The Midrash Rabbah (נח ל"א"ט), connects the instruction, קנים תעשה את (you will make the *teiva* with multiple floors), to the *korban* of birds brought by the *metzora* as part of his *tahara*.

“אמר רבי יצחק, מה הקן הזה מטהר את המצורע, אף תיבתך מטהרתך.” (R. Yitzchok says, just as the birds purify the *metzora*, the *teiva* purifies you.) This surprising *drasha* raises many questions. First of all, the Torah never uses the term קן to describe the birds brought by the *metzora*. They are simply called שתי צפורים. More essentially, what does the purification of the *metzora* have to do with the *teiva* built by Noach? What does the *drasha* of R. Yitzchok come to teach us?

Many *meforshim* attempt to resolve this question with a variety of approaches. I would like to propose the following possible explanation. Noach and his family were the only individuals saved from the flood. Noach was even told that they were saved, כי אותך ראיתי צדיק לפני, because of Noach's righteousness. This could easily have led them to become arrogant. קנים is the term used by the *chachomim* in the Mishna to describe the birds brought by the *metzora*. That word is meant to remind us of the reasons brought by Chazal, for the phenomenon of *tzaraas*.

“R. Yochanan said, ‘*Negaim* come for seven reasons, for *loshon hora*...and for גסות הרוח (arrogance). The *metzora*'s arrogance led him to malign and mock his fellow Jew. Therefore, he needs to humble himself as he presents himself to the *kohen* in order to become *tahor*. Even if the *metzora* is a great *gaon* and *talmid chochom*, and the *kohen* is an *am*



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ha'aretz who doesn't know right from left, the *metzora* must humbly submit himself before the *kohen* in order to become *tahor*. This *metzora* imagined that his talent or knowledge made him superior to others. This led him to scorn or denigrate other Jews. The Midrash Tanchuma states that such a person can only reach a state of *takana* by humbling himself.

The *metzora* has to bring עץ ארז, wood of the cedar tree, אֶזוֹב, the hyssop bush, and שְׁנֵי תוֹלַעַת, wool died red by the blood of a worm, along with the two birds. The Tanchuma explains that the cedar, the highest of trees, represents the arrogance which led the *metzora* to sin. The אֶזוֹב, the lowest of bushes, and the worm, represent the humility necessary for him to truly repent and change his ways.

The Maharal explains that the *metzora* brings birds, because a *metzora* is viewed as dead. Birds, who are able to fly, represent life and vitality. The quality and lightness of their bodies enable them to overcome gravity and take flight. *Tzaraas*, says the *Maharal*, represents physicality that has become so degraded, that it becomes "infected" with *tzaraas*. Unlike the birds whose bodies facilitate flight, the state of the *metzora's* body reflects how low he has fallen.

The word *kavod* is related to the term *kaveid*, (heavy). The *metzora* weighed himself down with an inflated sense of *kavod*, and will only be able to elevate himself, by lightening that load.

This is the lesson of קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת הַתִּיבָה. In order to survive the flood, Noah needed to internalize the lesson of the *metzora*.

The *yahrzeit* of Hagaon R. Meir Shapira of Lublin zt"l, comes out on the seventh of Cheshvan. I heard from one of his greatest talmidim, Hagaon R. Mordechai Yehuda Lubart zt"l, that when R. Meir Shapira travelled to America to raise funds for the yeshiva, he was dismayed by the pitiful state of American *yiddishkeit*. When he returned, he shared the pain he felt at seeing such a spiritual wasteland.



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At the time, many people told cruel jokes about the ignorant, unobservant American Jews. R. Meir Shapira's Rebbe, The Chortkover Rebbe zt"l, sent him a message instructing him to say only good and positive things about Jews. From then on, he utilized every opportunity to praise the positive aspects of American Jews.

Recently I saw a powerful story about the Rebbe R. Boruch of Mezhebuzh zy"a. (Harav Yisroel Grossman zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Pinsk Karlin, heard this from an old man who witnessed the story). Once Rav Asher, The Admor Ha"tzair of Stolin zy"a, stood among a group of his chasidim, and asked the following question. "Chazal state, 'אין בן דוד בא אלא בהיסח הדעת', (*Mashiach* will only come when people forget). How could Jews ever give up or forget about the *geula* that they hope for throughout the generations? *Emunah* and *bitachon* in the coming of *Mashiach*, is the only thing that enabled Am Yisrael to persevere, in the long exile?"

The Rebbe said that his father, the Beis Aharon of Karlin zy"a, told him that when he was a child, his father R. Asher, the Admor Hazakein of Stolin, took him to the tish of R. Boruch of Mezhebuzh, who posed the same question. R. Boruch answered the question by relating that once, he was in the *heichal* of the *Mashiach*. He saw the *Mashiach* resting on a golden couch, and a golden crown hung above his head. *Malachim* came before the *Mashiach* praising and defending Am Yisrael, by describing the many *mitzvos* they perform with great *mesirus nefesh*.

This testimony caused the *Mashiach* to stand up and put on his crown, for the time had come for him to redeem Am Yisrael. However, another group of *malachim* appeared, prosecuting Am Yisrael, and detailing their many *aveiros*, to the extent that the *heichal* was enveloped in darkness. The *Mashiach* removed his crown, hung it in its place, and returned to his golden couch, for he was no longer going to redeem Am Yisrael.

R. Boruch said that this process constantly repeated itself. The defending *malachim* would enter and praise Am Yisrael. *Mashiach* would stand up and put on his crown, only to remove it and sit down when the



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prosecuting *malachim* testified against Am Yisrael. The Rebbe said that this cycle will go on continuously until the time to redeem Am Yisrael truly arrives. At that point, the Mashiach will be in a state of היסח הדעת because there had been so many “false alarms”. However, at that time, he will utilize the היסח הדעת, to simply ignore the prosecuting *malachim*, and redeem Am Yisrael.

Each of us should ask himself, “How many times have I been a “prosecutor”, who may have prevented the Mashiach from coming and redeeming us?” We must strengthen ourselves in *mitzvos bein adam l’chaveiro*, and increase our care and concern for the *kavod* of every Jew. *Al achas kama v’kama*, we must certainly never insult or speak ill of any Jew. This will enable us to merit the *geula* as soon as possible.

I recently saw a wonderful story about R. Avrohom Eiger, the Lubliner Rebbe zt”l, who passed away recently. Once, when he was davening in one of the shuls of Bnei Brak, the *Baal Korei* made a serious mistake by repeating the name of Hashem. The *mispallelim* were shocked and protested, harshly criticizing the *Baal Korei*.

After davening, the Rebbe immediately approached the *Baal Korei*, and told him, “Baruch Hashem, you are such a talented and G-d fearing *Baal Korei*, that you have merited to be the type of person Chazal praised as שם שמים שגור על פיו. (Hashem’s name is constantly in his mouth). This story certainly portrays the Rebbe’s well known *midos tovos*. However, there is something much deeper we should learn from this story.

Certainly, an איש קדוש like the Lubliner Rebbe zt”l, was shaken to the core when he heard Hashem’s name being uttered in vain. However, he was even more distressed by the very possibility of a Jew being מתכבד (Seeking honor by shaming his fellow Jew), or הלבנת איש ישראל (Shaming another Jew in public). The *mispallelim*, who were upset and protested the lack of respect for Hashem’s name, should have thought carefully and done some honest, deep introspection. Were they



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truly shaken and upset purely for Hashem's sake? Perhaps there was also an element of enjoying someone else's downfall?

The Lubliner Rebbe zt"l, who was well known for his sincere humility, found and emphasized the positive sides of that *baal korei*.

We have to follow in his footsteps, and do everything possible to avoid any word or action that may minimize the *kavod* of another person. If we take an honest look at ourselves, we will discover how often our good deeds are fueled by ulterior motives and by our arrogance *rachmana li'tzlan*. No one should feel that they are superior to anyone else. Instead, they should devote their energy to finding the positive and admirable in their friends rather than the negative, מעלית חברינו ולא חסרונם.



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