

perspective. Write a private “letter to the complaint department” outlining what, exactly, is making you so unhappy, and watch the temper index drop.

Whenever you are about to “lose it,” take out a pad and pencil and start writing. It only takes a few minutes to jot down your thoughts and feelings, but it will save you hours – or even years – of regret. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

## Ethics of the Fathers

It is customary to study *Pirkei Abot* (Ethics of the Fathers) during the six weeks between Pesah and Shabuot, one chapter every Shabbat

וְכָל תּוֹרָה שֶׁאֵין עִמָּה מְלָאכָה סוֹפָה בְּטִלָּה

“All Torah study not combined with work will in the end cease.” (*Abot* 2:2)

Why will Torah without employment cease?

When a person accepts employment in a company, he is bound to certain conditions. He must arrive at work promptly and not leave early. On the job, he must work diligently and not attend to personal matters, etc.

Rabban Gamliel in this *Mishnah* is giving us valuable advice for success in Torah studies. One should approach Torah study as though it were one’s employment, following the learning schedule punctually and not interrupting to attend to personal matters. One who lacks this total commitment to his “vocation” of Torah study greatly risks failure, but with total dedication and the above-mentioned approach, he will merit Divine blessings for success. (Vedibarta Bam)

## His Daily Bread

Reb Reuven, the brother of the legendary R’ Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz (1886-1948), was a grocer in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. On the day of the funeral of R’ Shraga Feivel, thousands of people gathered at *Mesivta Torah Vodaath* on South Third Street to pay their final respects to the man who was an architect of Torah in America. (The funeral procession had made its way from Monsey, where it had begun in *Bet Midrash Elyon*.) On the way to his brother’s funeral, Reb Reuven was walking to the *Mesivta* when he suddenly went into a grocery along the way.

The people who were walking alongside Reb Reuven were taken aback. What could be so important to divert his attention from the matter at hand? In respect of Reb Reuven’s piety, no one said anything. When he was asked about it during the *shivah*, the answer he gave symbolized the special nature of the Mendelowitz family.

There was a poverty stricken man who came to Reb Reuven’s grocery every morning for bread and milk for his family. Reb Reuven never charged him but to preserve the man’s dignity he wrote the amount due on a balance sheet that he knew – and the poor man knew – would never be claimed. It was an unspoken pact between them.

“During the *shivah* my store will be closed,” explained Reb Reuven, “and this man will have to go to the other grocer for his family’s bread and milk. I wanted to be sure that the grocer wouldn’t charge him so I went in to assure him that I would cover the cost!”

If that’s what the grocers of that generation were, one can only imagine how extraordinary the Torah leaders were. (Reflections of the Maggid)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition  
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## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBATTAZRIA-

MESORA ☆ γ♦ρ↔μ♣N-γןfρ±ζ♥, X♥↑

Haftarah: Melachim II 7:3-20

**APRIL 28-29, 2017 3 IYAR 5777**

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 6:25 & 7:15 pm Shaharit: 4:59, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am  
 Candlelighting: 7:30 pm Morning Shema by: 8:30 am  
 Evening Shema after: 8:28 pm Shabbat Class: 6:00 pm

Shabbat Minhah: 7:10 pm  
 Shabbat Ends: 8:29 pm (R"Y 9:01)  
 Sunday Minhah: 7:00 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

**Please note that Sunday shaharit times are now 7:00 & 8:00. There is no longer an 8:30 minyan.**

**Mabrook to Benjy & Bonnie Nahama on the engagement of their daughter, Shelly, to Maurice Schmol.**

## A Message from Our Rabbi

”אָדָם כִּי־הָיָה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׁרוֹ”

“If a person will have on the skin of his flesh...” (*Vayikra* 13:2)

The laws of *sara'at* begin with the statement, “If an Adam will have a blemish.” The *Zohar* says that the description of a man in terms of an Adam is a term used for a very important and righteous person. This is very perplexing because the Sages teach that *sara'at* comes as a result of *lashon hara* and other sins! So how can we describe this person as an Adam?

Rabbi Nisan Alpert zt”l explains that the true measure of greatness of a person is not if he has a plague of *sara'at* or not, or if he learns *musar* or not. The real barometer is if the person uses tactics to purify himself from his faults. A man is an Adam if he finds that he has a blemish and he brings himself to the *Kohen* to seek the cure to his problem. He might have to force himself to come and not to be in denial.

It might be that he didn’t realize how severe the sin of evil talk is until he sees the effect it had, that it caused a blemish of *sara'at*. The mere fact that Hashem has communicated to him about this problem that he has, is a true sign of greatness. He is truly an Adam. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

## Perspective

The end of *Parashat Tazria* deals with *Sara'at* [the spiritual blemish often (mis)translated as leprosy] that appears on clothing. The *pasuk* says, “The *Kohen* will see the garment after it was washed, [*vheneh lo hafach hanega et ayno*] and he sees that the *nega* [blemish] has not changed its appearance, the garment is unclean, you should burn it in fire.” This is actually an idiomatic expression. The word “*ayno*” literally means “eye,” and the expression literally means, “The blemish has not changed its eye.”

I saw a beautiful insight, quoted in the name of the *Hidushai HaRim*. The *Gemara* in *Mesechet Arachin* says that a number of sins can cause *sara'at*. The most commonly known is *lashon hara* [evil tongue; slander]. However, the *Talmud* also says that the punishment of *sara'at* comes “*al sarat ha'ayin*.” *Sarat ha'ayin* [literally – narrowness of eye] does not only mean a person who is tight-fisted or cheap. A *sar ayin* is a person who never sees the good side of anything and always sees evil. It is the opposite of a generosity of spirit. It is a stinginess, regarding not only money, but regarding viewing life, in general. A *sar ayin* is a person who does not like to see other people's success. The only success that he is interested in is his own success.

If *sarat ha'ayin* causes *sara'at*, then the *tikun* [correction] that causes the *sara'at* to go away, is the person doing *teshubah* [repenting] and switching from being a *sar ayin* to a *tov ayin* [one with a good eye]. If the *sara'at* stays the same and does not get better, the garment is unclean and the person does not have a *tikun* for his sin.

The *Hidushai HaRim* continues with a classic concept: The word “*nega*” is really the same word as the word “*oneg*.” The only difference is the placement of the [letter] “*ayin*.” The “*nun*” and the “*gimel*” are in the same places. The only difference is whether the “*ayin*” is at the beginning or at the end. What is the difference between “*nega*” and “*oneg*?” What is the difference between a person having *sara'at* and a person having pleasure? It all depends on the placement of the “*ayin*.” That is this person's problem. The problem is with the “*ayin*.” His problem is with his perspective and his approach to life. His problem is with his *ayin*, so his *tikun* must be “*hafach hanega et ayno*.” He must change his “*ayin*.” He must take the “*ayin*” from the word “*nega*” and make it into “*oneg*.”

However, if someone is so stingy of spirit that he cannot be gracious and he cannot see the good side of life, then he remains a *mesora* and “*heneh lo hafach hanega et ayno*” – the *nega* remains and he must burn the garment because he is incapable of changing his “*ayin*.” He is incapable of changing his perspective. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

## Self-Destruction

There is an underlying theme to the message of the *Mesora*. This spiritual disease that causes discoloration of the skin or of hairs upon the skin, in unpredictable patches is caused by sins of speech – gossip, slander and the like. When a person notices the discoloration, he is to immediately approach a *Kohen* and show him the abnormality. It is up to the *Kohen* to not only to determine the status of the affliction, but to actually invoke the status of impurity on the man through his rendition of his adjudication on the matter.

The physical affliction of *sara'at* is definitely not a contagious one. In fact, the Torah teaches us that there are times that the *Kohen* can hold off on his declaration; e.g. a groom during the week of wedding festivities is spared the humiliation of isolation. If

*sara'at* were a communicable disease it would surely warrant immediate isolation despite the circumstances. Yet when a man is declared as *tameh* (impure) he is kept in isolation. The Torah explicitly explains: “All the days that the affliction is upon him he shall remain contaminated; he is contaminated. He shall dwell in isolation; his dwelling shall be outside the camp” (*Vayikra* 13:46).

The question is simple. If the sins of anti-social behavior cause the malady, why is the man isolated? Would it not be better if he is embarrassed within the community and learns to better himself through communal interaction? How will solitude help him cure his societal ills?

There is a classic tale of the gentleman who purchased a plane ticket from New York to Los Angeles. The man was quite finicky about traveling, and asked the agent for a window seat. Somehow, he was not placed by the window, rather in the aisle.

During the entire trip, he fidgeted and squirmed. Immediately after the long journey the man went straight to complain.

“I specifically asked for a window seat,” he exclaimed. “Your agent in New York assured me that I would be getting a window seat. Look at this stub. It placed me right in the aisle!”

The customer relations agent in Los Angeles was not fazed. She asked the man, “Did you ask the person in the window seat to trade places?”

This time the man was irate. “I was not able to!”

“And why not?”

“There was no one in the seat.”

My grandfather, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory, in his classic work *Emet L'Yaakov* explains. People often blame the ramifications of their doings on everyone else but themselves. Truth be told, a person who is afflicted can circumvent confinement by not reporting the *nega* to the *Kohen*, or even by pulling out the hairs that are discolored. It is akin to a man who is sentenced to house imprisonment. His hands are tied together with the rope attached to his teeth. He is told to watch himself and not escape.

In essence, a *nega* is merely a Divine wake-up-call. It is Heaven's way of letting an individual know that there is something wrong. It is a personal message and must be taken personally. And so in solitude the man sits and ponders what exactly needs correction.

If a person wants to correct himself, he need not cavort with others to do so. If one can remove the barriers of false flattery and social mendacity, he can do a lot better for himself: because self-improvement is dependent upon self-motivation. Without the truth meeting the self, any attempt toward self-improvement may lead to nothing more than self-destruction. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetsky)

## Put It in Writing

You are only human, and sometimes you just can't take it. Your blood starts to boil. Good sense gets pushed to the back of the cranium, and anger takes over. At that point, it is possible to do something stupid and act in a manner you will soon regret.

But what can be done when you just can't bear it anymore?

Temper control is a lifelong task. Maimonides says that in all character traits we should strive to develop a middle course – except for the trait of conceit and the trait of anger. Those two traits are so bad that we should work on eliminating them completely from our personalities.

But what is a person to do? After all, we are only human.

A surprisingly effective approach is to write down your grievances. Your feelings will be vented and your businesslike approach to frustration will help put things into