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WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Doctors and Healing

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Part I. Permission To Be Healthy

Permission to Heal

In this week's *sedrah* we read about someone who wounds his fellow man and because of that, many obligations now fall at his feet.

In Torah there's no such thing as *paturing* yourself with an "I'm sorry." Some people say "Oh" and "Uh," and "We're so sorry", and they think they're done. Sorry?! When you're a *mazik*? You're responsible! "Excuse me," is not enough. It's a sin to cause damage. And you have to pay for it!

Now, included in those obligations is **וְרָפָא יִרְפָּא** – *he must pay for a doctor to heal the one that he wounded*. He can't tell the victim that he should heal on his own, to have *bitachon* and rely on Hashem; he has to pay the doctor bills.

And he has to pay for a good doctor too (Bava Kama 85a). **וְרָפָא יִרְפָּא**, a double *lashon*, for emphasis – "I don't want any horsing around," says Hashem, "Bring him to the hospital and make sure he gets healed." And on this *possuk* the Gemara (*ibid.*) comments, **מִכָּאן שֶׁנִּתְּנָה רְשׁוּת לְרוֹפֵא לְרַפְאוֹת** – *from here we learn that the physician has permission to heal*.

The Tinkerers

Now, why it's called "permission," why permission is required, that's easy to understand. After all, how can an ordinary human being have the *chutzpah* to tinker with the body?

Even if he studied medicine and he's a specialist too – the body is such a marvelous and complicated piece of machinery that it would be irresponsible for a *basar vadam* to make an attempt to intervene. Hakodosh Boruch Hu has created such a marvel that if you studied it for a million years, you'll never get to the bottom of the wisdom of even one cell. So how could you allow this doctor to tinker around – that's the truth; he's only a tinkerer.

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As a Zechut for a Zivug Hagun for
Rachel Simcha bat Chana Leah

Killed by Pearls

You know, when Louis XIV of France was laying sick on his deathbed, the best physicians were brought into the palace to try and heal him. So what did they do? It's recorded in *Journal de Santé du Roi*, The Journal of the King's Health. The best medical care was made available to this monarch. For royalty only the most royal care would do. And so because he could afford it, the royal physician melted pearls and poured them down his throat.

Now, an ordinary subject would never have merited such expensive "medicine" but for King Louis, no stone would be left unturned and so the doctors got busy; they did everything they could to kill him and finally they succeeded. A few days before his seventy second birthday he passed away. If he was a poor man, he might have survived; it could very well be he would have lived into his eighties.

Of course, we know that medicine has advanced since the days of King Louis – no decent doctor today would write a prescription for melted pearls – but you can be sure that fifty years or a hundred years from now, they'll ridicule much of today's medicine. Even ten years from now they'll laugh at some of the medicines and procedures we rely on today.

Your Personal Drug Store

And therefore we might have thought to let nature – that's Hashem's creation – run its course. Let the body heal itself! After all, we know that Hashem created the human body for optimum efficiency; He equipped our bodies to be able to cope with all the different sicknesses. That's why even when people neglect their health and they catch a cold, let's say they're sitting near somebody who's coughing or they go outside without a coat and they get sick, the body's system fights back and rescues him from illness. The cold doesn't go away by itself – that's the *Rofei Chol Basar* at work.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu actually made the body itself into a drug store. The body is full of medicines; so many secretions – gradually we are discovering some of them – that come to our aid and are saving our lives all the time. It's remarkable how many forms of healing the body itself creates.

Superpower Skin

You know, the world has many dangerous microbes that are constantly alighting on your skin. You're touching so many objects during the day and a big variety of microorganisms find their way onto your body – many different diseases are represented by the germs on your skin.

But what did Hakadosh Baruch Hu do? The Creator made it that the skin has the power to destroy germs. It's not merely a wrapper to contain the body, the skin itself is one of the major organs of the body. The skin produces antiseptic materials that kill off harmful microorganisms and germs. It's so efficient that most germs are destroyed within twenty minutes of landing on your skin although they could last hours on other surfaces.

Every kind of infection is floating in the air, but as it hits us, the body fights back and protects itself. Otherwise, every germ would find a soft place to feed and it would fester; they would become sores and in a few hours the entire body would be covered with sores.

Fighting the Invaders

And even when the invaders make their way into the body, the body is quite capable of self-healing. You know, sometimes people cough in your face. It happens sometimes; last week I was walking on Kings Highway and a man came over to me to ask me a question. And as he's talking he's coughing; he's coughing in my face. Coughing and coughing. I couldn't dodge him – it wouldn't be *derech erez*. But I was thinking, "Ribono Shel Olam, please save me!" I was davening the whole time he was talking.

Sometimes you yourself are guilty. You were on the subway or the bus where you were holding onto the strap; but just before you grabbed that strap someone with an illness who had wiped his nose or coughed into his hand had hung on the same strap. And then you were foolish enough to put your dirty finger into your nose or mouth. You just introduced invaders into your body!

And so all those germs that came in from the outside have to be repelled. What did Hakodosh Boruch Hu do? In the blood itself, in the bloodstream, there are antibodies whose purpose it is to destroy microbes. We have thousands, some say there are a million different kinds of antibodies in the human organism. That's a statement by a certain writer – he says that our bodies produce a million different antibodies! One for whooping cough, one for measles, for this virus and that virus – there's no end to the viruses – and our bodies are fighting them off with antibodies.

You know what that means? There's no chemical company that can supply as many different kinds of materials that our body produces. It's something that's so spectacular we can't even start thinking about it.

Crime Scene Investigators

And they're all floating around in each cell waiting for the time when some microbe enters. There are the phagocytes and lymphocytes and the neutrophils that are policemen of the body that swim back and forth in the bloodstream looking for miscreants and criminals who might have entered the body.

And when these policemen get the call; they hear by long distance telegram that somewhere in the body the skin was breached and a foreign matter entered, so from all parts of the body these policemen of the body hasten under their own power and they go straight to the place without wandering, without asking for directions.

But that's only the beginning because when they arrive they have to find the culprit. Now the

blood is a very busy street – in the blood there are all kinds of things. There are various nutritional materials that are being conveyed by the blood to thousands of places all over the body. The blood is also conveying waste materials; all kinds of secretions are in the blood. It's very crowded in there! So how can these corpuscles, these antibodies, discover who are the invaders that don't belong in the body?

Real Policemen

And still without being told, unerringly they go straight to the ones that are the culprits. It's like picking out a criminal on a busy street; he is not standing with his gun and with his mask on his face – he's trying to melt in with the crowd. How can you recognize who he is? But these antibodies unerringly go directly to the criminal – they don't stop and ask, "Where is the criminal? Did you see any wrongdoers here?" They know right away where he is, and they go straight to him.

And they don't bring him to a judge that the judge should release him again. They don't arrest him! No, they're not liberals! They do justice on the spot. He is sentenced and punished – no appeals! The white corpuscles swallow up the criminals. They gobble up the microbe on the spot.

Ahh! If only we had policemen like that – not little runty policemen or fat little policewomen standing on the street corners; if we had big burly cops who are able to swallow a criminal, that would be the best kind of justice.

But that's what's happening all the time in our body – the best Doctor is on the job all the time. And so Hakodosh Boruch Hu doesn't need any outside apothecaries to supply medicines because He has a whole chemical manufacturing complex within the body. The body fights infections and it fights every kind of disaster which had it not been opposed would ruin the body; constantly there are all kinds of arrangements in the body that help a person to remain more or less stable. In most cases illness is cured by itself.

Herd Immunity

Even in the ancient times when they didn't know about vaccines – they didn't know about germs at all – so when an epidemic occurred it spread like wildfire. And yet despite the proliferation of bacteria sooner or later the epidemic died out because that's the system of Hashem.

And so, if that's the case, we wouldn't know if it's even permitted to rely on doctors. After all they know so little – whatever they know is only a drop in the bucket. And what we do know is that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is most capable; He is capable of healing whomever He wants to heal, no question about it.

And so along comes the Torah and it tells us **וְרַפָּא יְרַפָּא** – *You have My permission*. More than permission – you have to go to a physician. **וְרַפָּא וְרַפָּא**, it's double words, for emphasis. **וְרַפָּא יְרַפָּא** – Make it your business to see that you go to a doctor.

Among Jews there's no such thing as priest healers. You don't heal by prayers, by incantations or magic stones. That's not Torah. There's no such thing as a medicine-man and there never was such a thing among Jews. Find somebody who is competent according to the best medical theory of the days in which you live – of course you don't take anybody who doesn't know anything – find somebody who is competent and let him try. **וְרַפָּא יְרַפָּא** – “You have My permission,” says Hashem. “I'm putting it in your hands and it's up to you to keep yourself healthy.”

Part II. Obligation To Be Healthy

Follow The Science

Now you can understand the following story. When Reb Yisroel Salanter wasn't well he traveled to Kenigsberg to the medical clinic, to see one of the top doctors. That itself is an important lesson – he looked for the best and he traveled to find

him. But even more important is what this doctor said. He made a statement about Reb Yisroel. This physician had more than a thousand patients and he said, “Of my thousand patients, there is one person – only one person – who faithfully observes all of my directives.” And he pointed to Reb Yisroel Salanter *zichrono livracha*. Reb Yisroel was the one who was most conscientious about following the doctor's orders.

You know why? Because Reb Yisroel was a Torah Jew who understood the lesson of **וְרַפָּא יְרַפָּא**. It's a *din* like any other *din* – in some respects, even more than other *dinim*. And Reb Yisroel took that responsibility very seriously. Just like he took the mitzvah of lulav and esrog and matzah and everything else seriously, **וְרַפָּא יְרַפָּא**, the permission to be healed, was no less important. It means that Hashem is putting our health into our hands and now it's part of our *avodas Hashem*.

Actions Have Consequences

Now to understand this we'll have a quotation from the Mesilas Yesharim. Mesilas Yesharim is talking about people who look for excuses to avoid doing their duties; to avoid coming to learn, to avoid doing *mitzvos*. And one of the excuses that people employ is the excuse that it is too strenuous for them, it's a pressure on their health.

Now, before he continues and explains that often it's merely the laziness of the person that is speaking, the Mesilas Yesharim explains that if it actually is so, then they are right. When it actually is dangerous then they're right.

And he says something very interesting, the Mesillas Yesharim says a big *chiddush* now. In addition to the inherent danger of not taking care of yourself, **הִנֵּה עוֹד הוּא מִתְחַיֵּב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ בְּחַטָּא אֲשֶׁר הוּא הוֹטָא** – *he's held responsible because he's doing a sin*. By putting himself into peril, he's doing a sin! **וְנִמְצָא וְנִמְצָא** – *And the result is that it's the sin that causes him to be punished*.

It's not only a matter of germs and seeing doctors – it's a matter of *avodas Hashem*. When a

man is negligent, when he disregards danger, that man is doing a sin and for that sin he deserves punishment. And although it wasn't decreed beforehand on him but when the punishment comes, it's his fault because the sin of putting himself into danger has incurred punishment. And so, how great is our responsibility to guard our health and protect ourselves from harm.

A Fellow Named You

You know, our entire *sedrah* is filled with *dinim* about a person's responsibility not to harm a fellow Jew. To harm someone, to cause him ill health, is a very serious sin and you don't know how much is going to be collected from you in retribution for harming your fellow Jew. Now suppose that fellow happens to be named *you* and you harm *him*; just because it's yourself, nothing is going to be deducted. On the contrary, you're even more responsible when it's yourself you're harming.

When a man harms his brother, he's more guilty than harming a stranger because a brother you must love more. And if he harms himself, he's more guilty than harming his brother. If you are drowning *chas v'sholom*, and your brother is drowning and there is only one life preserver, and it cannot hold up two people, don't be chivalrous, hold onto it yourself. חַיִּיךָ וְחַיִּי חֲבֵרְךָ, חַיִּיךָ קוֹדְמִים – *your life comes first* (Bava Metzia 62a).

You have to have pity on yourself first. Because we are not given the power over our bodies; we don't own ourselves; we are strangers to our bodies, and the bodies are given in trust to us. We are guardians over our bodies and it's our duty to take care of these bodies, these Jewish bodies. And those who are lazy with their health, those people are transgressing this great sin of being careless with their health.

Double Insurance

So when you come in from the street and you were in the subway, or on the trolley or bus, and you were holding onto the strap, so it's common

sense, you don't have to be a big scientist to know that you have to wash your hand with soap and water before you touch food. Because just before you, someone with an illness who had wiped his nose or coughed into his hand had hung on the same strap.

That's why it's a good idea when you come from the street to wash with soap and water before you eat. And then after your hands are nice and clean you take a *keli* and you pour water on your hands and make *hamotzi* so you have double insurance. Make sure you do that. That's included in the lesson of וְרַפָּא וְרַפָּא because as much as Hakodosh Boruch Hu is doing in this world, He left room for you to take care of yourself.

It's true that your skin is hard at work destroying the microorganisms but the ones that alighted on your hand in the last ten minutes didn't have a chance to be destroyed yet so don't rely on that. If you do, you're a sinner. And whatever happens is the punishment for that sin.

Hit the Hay!

The very first thing is to take care of yourself. Here's a man who persists in going to bed late just because he's reading something interesting – he can't put down the book or newspaper. Maybe he can't turn off that infernal machine; he can't tear himself away from the program and so finally, the spouse or the parent says "Look Chaim! It's already half past twelve! And you're not well."

"Oh, I didn't notice the time." That's a *cheit*! You have to hit the hay early. I myself know two cases of boys who didn't go to sleep on time and they went insane, *nit eingedacht*. Yes, it happened. They ruined their lives. Others got sick. And they're to blame!

Now some people say, "Well, I want to be a *masmid*." Better listen to the Chofetz Chaim. The Chofetz Chaim came into his yeshiva, in Radin, at night, and when he saw boys learning late, he said "Gei shlufen. Morgen is oich a tug." He told the boys

to go to sleep. “You can learn tomorrow,” he said. That’s a sensible *talmid chochom!*

Because when someone goes to bed late and gets up in the morning weary and lacking energy, then he’s not prepared for the battle against germs. It’s a constant battle against bacteria. It’s only if your organism is vigorous, then it’s up to the struggle. But if you present a weakened organism to such a hostile world, then it’s a *chet* and whatever happens is his punishment.

Stop The Munchies

Here is another person who likes to munch. So before going to bed he takes a bag of peanuts or pistachios and he sits down and munches, and munches, and munches. He munches away his life. That person is not taking care of his health. Who said this food is good for him?

You must eat what’s good for your health. That’s Torah! In Mesichta Bava Metzia (107b), there’s a whole long *sugya* which deals with the subject that is nothing other than the importance of eating breakfast. The Gemara enumerates all the benefits that come from *pas shachris*, what illnesses can be avoided, what emotional upsets can be avoided.

Suppose a *tzaddik* rushed out in the morning without breakfast and during the day he lost his equilibrium and he became angry, he didn’t have energy enough to accomplish certain things and he didn’t feel well during the day, a number of results. And being a *tzaddik*, in each case he attributes all these things to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and he feels that he has exercised his righteousness as a *ma’amin*. But according to the *sugya* in Bava Metzia, it all stems from neglect to eat *pas shachris*. He should have eaten a piece of bread in the morning.

Eating and Noshing

Everybody knows you must eat on time. And if you don’t follow a schedule, you’re harming yourself. Everybody knows you have to chew your

food properly; you cannot gulp unchewed food. He’s in a hurry, he doesn’t have any patience; it’s not an excuse, you must eat healthfully!

Now, will we specify for you that candies and cakes are wrong to eat? It would be foolish for anybody to make such a rule. Sometimes a candy or a piece of cake is important to give you a lift; sometimes it’s not wrong. Many times people are down and they need a lift and then it’s recommended that they take a nosh and enjoy life a little bit more than the regular routine. Yes, sometimes you can do things that are not wrong to do, only that they’re not recommended, but you do it in order to raise your spirits.

But ordinarily, things that are full of sugar will cause your teeth to rot unless you brush your teeth after eating them. And sometimes they take the place of the nourishing foods that you should be eating, and therefore it’s not sensible for a person to waste his efforts on *nosherai*.

Common Cold and Crookedness

In Mishlei (22:5) it states **צְנִיִּים פְּחִיִּים בְּרֶרֶךְ עֵקֶשׁ שׁוֹמֵר נִפְשׁוֹ יִרְחַק מֵהֶם**. Which means “There are thorn bushes and there are ditches, pits in the road of the crooked man, the one who guards himself keeps far away from them”. But the Gemara in Kesubos (30a) explains this *possuk* in a different way. **צְנִיִּים** means the word **צָנָה** – cold and **פְּחִיִּים** – the word heat. To suffer from cold, you can catch colds and *pachim*, not to get sun-stroked, that’s *b’derech ikesh*. These things happen to a man who has a crooked mentality. **שׁוֹמֵר נִפְשׁוֹ יִרְחַק מֵהֶם**. And on this the Gemara says **הַכֹּל בְּיַדֵּי שָׁמַיִם חוּץ מִצְנִיִּים וּפְחִיִּים** – everything is in the hands of heaven except cold and heat.

When Reb Yisroel Salanter was sick once with a cold, his friends saw that he was very concerned. So they said, “What are you worried about? It’s nothing but a cold!”

So he said, “The Gemara states **צְנִיִּים וּפְחִיִּים בְּרֶרֶךְ עֵקֶשׁ**. If a person catches a cold, it’s a sign that he has a crooked mentality; it means he’s not doing

what's incumbent upon him to do." That's what Reb Yisroel was worried about!

Real Emunah

So we learn from this Gemara that in very many cases illnesses are the result of a man's own negligence. Which means a big part of the unhappiness of life is caused by the lack of foresight. And not in a materialistic sense but because he neglected his duty as a servant of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, therefore he's being punished. So when a man is unhappy in life, he has to realize to a big extent, it's the sin that caused it.

Now that's a lot to swallow! People are reluctant to admit that because it puts a great deal of responsibility on one's shoulders. People prefer to have *emunah* and blame Hakodosh Boruch Hu. But they should have real *emunah* and blame themselves. A great deal of the unhappiness of life is a punishment for neglecting his duty to Hakodosh Boruch Hu in caring for his health. And therefore, now that we learn this it means there's a responsibility on us for our own happiness. We are the ones who are the authors of our happiness or *chalilah*, of our unhappiness.

Part III. Praying to Be Healthy

The Only Healer

And now we come to the great paradox; it's the most important part of this entire subject, and that's the great ideal of *רְפָאנוּ הַשֵּׁם וְנִרְפָּא*, *Heal us Hashem and we shall be healed*. We say those words every day, a few times a day, only that sometimes we say it so quickly, so superficially, that we forget what the words are telling us. And in its most simple understanding it means, "Only by Your means can we be healed." Again, *רְפָאנוּ הַשֵּׁם* – *Heal us Hashem*, *וְנִרְפָּא* – *and thus we shall be healed*. Certainly if Hashem heals we are going to be healed! So it means to say *only* thus can we be healed. After everything is said and done, You, Hashem are our only Doctor.

It means that even when we are doing everything, we are taking all the necessary steps to guard our health, using the utmost precautions, but it's done with the full awareness that without Hashem it's nothing at all. *רְפָאנוּ הַשֵּׁם וְנִרְפָּא* – You are the One who is healing us. Although it is our duty to seek remedies – to live by the dictates of good sense in order to maintain our health – nevertheless we should never lose sight of the fundamental intention that Hashem should grant success to our efforts; that He is the healer.

Now that's easy to say but not so easy to do because when we are busy guarding our health – and we should! – it drives out of our heads any other consideration; and after a while it occurs to us that it's our efforts that are giving us success.

Applying Antiseptics

And that's why it's so important to remind ourselves always – not only three times a day: "*רְפָאנוּ הַשֵּׁם* – *Heal us Hashem*, *וְנִרְפָּא* – *and only because of You will we be healed*." Every effort we make in the direction of *וְנִרְפָּא יְרַפָּא* should be accompanied with the thought, "I'm doing my part, Hashem, but I'm doing it with the knowledge that it's You."

So if your skin is punctured and you run to the medicine chest and take out something, whether it's peroxide or schnapps, at the same time you should utter a little *tefillah* before you get into the bathroom: *יְהי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם שִׁיְהֵא עֵסֶק זֶה לִי לְרַפּוּאָה* – "It should be Your will Hashem that this business should heal me. I don't trust in the mercurochrome. I don't put my hopes into peroxide, into antiseptics, into salves." And as you're putting the medicine on the little wound you're thinking that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the One who's going to do the healing.

Of course, *וְנִרְפָּא יְרַפָּא* – you have to do it. We're not saying, "Hashem, we're going to lean back and relax; we're waiting for You." Oh no, we're doing everything. And still as much as it's our job to shake a leg and care for ourselves, yet every

endeavor which we make and which we must make must be accompanied by the fundamental awareness that we are not doing anything except our duty and that it's Hakodosh Boruch Hu who is doing the healing.

Useful Wisecracks

Now, once you understand that, we can come back to the words that I quoted to you a few weeks ago from our old friend Benjamin Franklin: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Now the truth is that Benjamin Franklin just said wisecracks, plays on words. Sometimes it's useful advice too, but it's only a play on words mostly – it wasn't anything too profound. And so, this idea that the prevention is worth more than the cure we know without Benjamin Franklin. It's common sense; better to guard your health than to have to heal yourself, no question about it. It's much better to sleep on time and to eat on time than to become ill and go to physicians for all kinds of disorders.

Only that we're going to understand it now better than Benjamin Franklin did – and that's because we know that the best prevention is Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

The Best Advice

We'll study this in some detail now; in Mesichta Shabbos, the Gemara states **לְעוֹלָם יִבְקֶשׂ אָרָם רַחֲמִים** – *A man should always be praying to Hashem, asking for mercy that he should not become sick.* **לְעוֹלָם** means *always*; even when you're in the best of health, when there is no premonition, there's no inkling of any misfortune and it seems that you're speeding down the straightway of happiness, success and perfect health for the rest of your days. *That's* the best time to ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu for good health. You should pray to Hakodosh Boruch Hu to remain well.

Now just that alone, before we explain it any further, that's already a piece of very good advice. I really should charge you admission tonight

because if I ever told you anything that was worthwhile, this is it – to pray to Hakodosh Boruch Hu for good health while you still have it. The best time to cry out to be saved is when everything is well!

It's important for you young people to think about that. You're healthy?! Cry out to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that you should stay well! When you walk down Ocean Avenue, you see signs. A doctor specializing in this, a doctor specializing in that, a doctor specializing in something else. Look how many things they specialize in! Look how many problems could happen. Even one thing wrong and you have to go to a big specialist *chas v'shalom*. And there are so many things that could go wrong, it's endless. So cry out now before the *tzarah*: "Ribono Shel Olam, please save me! Please keep me healthy!"

Getting Out of a Summons

And the Gemara adds a reason to pray when you're healthy: **שָׂאֵם חֲלָה אוֹמְרִים לוֹ הֲבֵא זְכוּת וְהַפְטִיר** – *Because once he does become sick they will say to him, "Bring some proof in order to be freed."* Once a man is lying in bed, it's much harder for him to get out of it with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Now that you're already in the hands of a sickness, you're in the hands of medicines and doctors, now it'll take more to get you healed.

And the Gemara gives a *moshol*. Suppose a man walks out onto the street and he sees a policeman coming to him. So he takes out a fiver and he says "Not me officer, you're not looking for me". Five dollars can help you if the officer is looking for trouble but he didn't catch you yet. If however, the officer is writing a summons already, you can't get away with \$5, it's hard to tear up a summons. For \$25 he'll do it.

However, suppose he handed it in already in the precinct; it's in the books already. Now you have to go to the lieutenant already; with him a measly \$25 won't work, you need a bigger sum. But suppose you're standing in front of the judge. You

can't just slip the judge \$50. Somebody has to bring a letter to the judge and he says "here's some documents on this case", and it just happens to be that one of the documents is a \$500 check. The next day the judge bangs the gavel and makes an announcement: "According to these documents, new evidence has been revealed that cast new light on this case."

That's the *moshol* of the Gemara. It means that the longer you postpone your efforts in prayer to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, the more you fall into the pit of sickness, the bigger the cost is going to be to get out.

Calling Out in Truth

Now, the question is why does Hakodosh Boruch Hu follow this system? Why does Hakodosh Boruch Hu demand more if a man becomes more involved?

You know, every day we say in Ashrei the following words: קְרוֹב הַשֵּׁם לְכֹל קוֹרְאָיו – Hashem is near to all who call out to Him; you know when He's near? When is Hashem near? לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יְקַרְאֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת – to all who call Him in truth. If you're calling out in truth, then He's right there.

But what is Dovid Hamelech referring to here? Who doesn't call out to Him in truth? When you ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu for wealth, don't you mean it? When you ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu for success, don't you mean it? Who is not calling out in truth?

Of course if a person says the words and doesn't even think what he's saying, that certainly is not 'in truth'. If a man says *Refo'einu* and he's not even thinking what he's saying, that's nothing. But this Dovid Hamelech is not even talking about; such things didn't exist in the ancient times.

Dovid is talking about a person who says *Refo'einu* and he means it with all his heart. If his mind could be x-rayed, we would see immediately, he means it! He's very afraid. The specialist sent out the tests and he's waiting for the results.

Maybe it's that dreaded disease – I don't want to say it; it begins with a 'c'. So of course he's calling out in truth! What does it mean "Hashem is close to all who call out in truth"?

Know You Have a Heart?

And the answer is that *b'emes*, in truth, means *emunah*. When Dovid refers to someone who "calls out in truth", it means somebody who speaks to Hakodosh Boruch Hu with a conviction that only Hakodosh Boruch Hu can grant success. Someone who understands that nothing in the world means anything except the *rotzon Hashem*.

When a man is already sick and forced to turn to Hakodosh Boruch Hu it's also good – it's *always* good – but he's waking up now because his back is pressed against the wall. There is no comparison to the *tefillah* which a man makes when he is not hard-pressed – that's the *tefillah* that shows you're relying on Hashem *b'emes*.

Pray for a healthy heart when you don't even know that you have a heart. When it's functioning so perfectly, you're not aware that it's there, that's the time to stipulate! Ah if you do that, then you are calling out to Hashem *b'emes*. That's the best heart medicine. To pray that the kidneys should never shut down *chas v'sholom*, while the kidneys are functioning so smoothly, that all you know about the kidneys is what you read or see pictures in the drug store windows, that's the time to pray to Hakodosh Boruch Hu for good kidneys.

Head in the Clouds

So when a man calls out in truth it means he's doing everything. He's fulfilling the lessons of יִרְפָּא וְיִרְפָּא to its fullest. He wouldn't even look at a cigarette! He eats well, he sleeps eight hours a night. If he has to shake hands, he doesn't touch his mouth with his fingers subsequently. He handles his food only with a napkin, only with a fork; even a piece of bread he picks up with a napkin. He's doing everything to protect himself because that's the will of Hashem.

And yet at the same time he knows that washing hands and eating healthy is worthless. “My getting to sleep early doesn't accomplish a thing. Even my doctor appointment is meaningless.” He's always calling out to Hashem because he knows that nothing else matters. “It's nothing but Your blessing that will keep me healthy!” He relies only on Hakodosh Boruch Hu and he appeals to Him for success; that's called calling to Hashem in truth.

And that's the man who lives with his feet in this world, just the way Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants, and at the same time his head, his thoughts, are with Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Healing the Body and Soul

In this week's Parsha, the Torah teaches us that we have a responsibility to heed doctors and their medical advice. We must do everything in our power to remain healthy, yet we must remember that all health comes from Hashem, the ultimate Healer, by praying constantly for His protection.

This week I will *bli neder* keep this lesson in mind twice daily. Once while doing something to maintain my health; such as going to sleep, eating healthfully, or exercising. And again, before I recite the *brocha* of *Refoeinu* in Shemone Esrei.

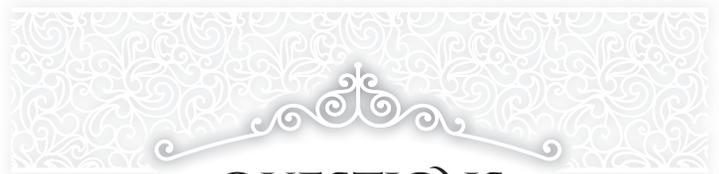
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Why don't rabbonim talk more about honesty in business?

A:

And the answer is that every day a Jew is getting this lesson. A little boy goes to the yeshiva and right away he learns 'arba avos nezikin', about all the different forms of damage that he's responsible for. Once a man stopped me on the street and he asked me, "Why is my grandson learning law in the yeshiva? Is he going to be a lawyer?" I told him what Rav Yisrael Salanter answered. Rav Yisrael Salanter said that when you grow up then it's already too late to learn the responsibility you have to a fellow man's money. You'll never feel any *hargashah* for somebody else's money by that time. And therefore you have to start right from the beginning.

Certainly, Jewish children are being taught that. They're learning about *gezel* and damages; even a lost object one has to return. The first thing we teach our little children is *mamon acheirim*, other people's money. That's the first and most important lesson. So certainly the Jewish nation is getting that instruction; more than anybody else in the world.

Which nation compares to us? *Mi k'amcha Yisrael goy echad ba'aretz* - Who can compare to us? Which nation teaches their little boys not to do harm to other people's property? It's ridiculous! Nobody can compare to the Jewish nation. Bava Kama and Bava Metzia and Bava Basra are all talking about *mamon acheirim*, about how important other people's money is.

TAPE # E-120

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