



that since Rav Yosef humbled himself before Rabba, the merit of his humility protected him and his family, and they did not need any medical attention during all the years that Rabba was the leader.

### Bitachon - Lessen Fear

It is brought in the name of Arizal that a plague does not have power over those who strengthen themselves in *Bitachon* (trust in Hashem). They should study Torah diligently and [recite] the *Ketores*, and this will help to eradicate the plague. (Shomer Emunim - Bitachon and Hishchazkus chapter 2).

### Birkas "Asher Yotzar" With Intent Thank Hashem For Our Good Health

We have a tradition that making the brochoh "Asher Yotzar" with proper intent saves one from all sicknesses. (Rav Moshe Sternbuch).

Lack of gratefulness for the good that one receives from Heaven is a great cause for one to stop receiving that good. Although Hashem is the source of all blessing and is constantly giving with abundance, and He does not personally gain anything from our thanks, it is still incumbent upon us to praise, bless and thank Him for the good that He gives us. One must always thank Hashem, for He is the true source of any good that we have. (Yad Yosef - drush 2 on Bishalach). [Accordingly, in this period when there is fear of contracting Corona-virus, we should be especially careful to thank Hashem for the good health that we have.]

Each and every praise that we offer to Hashem causes the Shechinah's presence amongst us to increase [which causes our prayers to be answered more readily and brings Heavenly protection (Yefe To'ar). The more we praise, the more the Shechinah comes amongst us (Maharzu)]. (Bereishis Rabba 48 7).

### Avoid Lashon Hora

*Lashon Horah* is a very serious sin. We find (Bamidbar 14 37) that in the *midbar*, those who spoke *Lashon Hora* were killed through an epidemic. (Rav Chaim Palagi - Refuah ViChaim chapter 5 paragraph 40).

Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlit"a writes this as well regarding this epidemic, that we should all strengthen ourselves in avoiding *Lashon Hora* and *Rechilus*.

### Pitum Hakitores

Recitation of *Pitum Hakitores* is a wonderful thing to do during an epidemic (Arizal); see Zohar (Vayera 100b-101a).

Rav Akiva Eiger zt"l (Igros - letter 71) wrote that during an epidemic people should say *Parshas Hakitores* by *Shachris* and by *Mincha*, and then say the following prayer:

רבון העולמים, גלוי לפני כסא כבודך אשר מדת הדין מתוהה עלינו בעונותינו, וביאנו לחלות את פניך שתעצר המגפה והמשחית מעלינו, ולא תתן הפושחית לבוא אל ביתנו, ורחם עלינו ועל טפנו ועל עוללנו ועל כל ישראל עמה, וקבל ברחמים וברצון את תפלתנו, קענן שגאמר (תהלים קמ"א ב) "תכון תפלתך קטרות לפניך משאת פפי מנחת ערב", וקמו שקבלת קטרות הסמים שהקטיר לפניך אהרן הפהו פאשר החל הנגף בעם, שגאמר (במדבר י"ז ט"ו) "וישמד בין המתים ובין החיים ותעצר המגפה", וקמו שגאמר בקנחוס (תהלים ק"ו ל') "וישמד פינחס ויפלה ותעצר המגפה", וכן בידו (שמאל ב' כ"ד כ"ה) "ויבן פם דוד מזבח לה' ויעל עלות ושלמים ויעתר לה' לארץ ותעצר המגפה מעל ישראל". כי אתה אבינו וזה תלויזות עיינו, ורפאנו ה' ונרפא, הושיענו ונשעה כי תהלתנו אתה. שכן פתוב בתורתך (דברים ז' ט"ו) "והסיר ה' ממוך כל חלי וכל מדוני מצרים הרעים אשר ידעת לא ישים בה ונתנם בכל שנתך". לה' הושיעה על עמך ברכתך סלה (תהלים ג' ט).

Following the recital of *Pitum Hakitores*, one should also say the following *pesukim* three times each (Rav Moshe Sternbuch):

ה' צב-אות עמנו משגב לנו אלקי יעקב סלה: ה' צב-אות אשרי אדם בוטח בה: ה' הושיעה המלה יענינו ביום קראנו:

### Mitzva to Guard One's Health

One who transgresses the direction of physicians in preserving one's health [during an epidemic] is a great sinner before G-d, for [halachically] a physical danger is treated more seriously than something forbidden (Chulin 10a). Especially when his actions can cause the spread of the sickness, his sin is greater than can be borne. (Rav Akiva Eiger - Igros - letter 73).

It is incumbent upon everyone to guard himself to the utmost of his ability (Peleh Yo'etz - "Dever").

### Do Not Lie

One must be especially careful not to say a lie, for one who lies during an epidemic is in danger (Arizal, as quoted by Bais Dovid - yoreh deyah 57).

### Avoid Machlokes

One must always be careful to avoid *machlokes*, but especially so during an epidemic. Avoid discord with any member of your household, and more so with your relatives and neighbors, as it is a cause for danger [during an epidemic]. The truth is that anyone with common sense will always yield to others regarding physical, personal or financial matters or honor, for he will end up gaining more than he loses. He will be richly rewarded in *Olam Hazeih* and *Olam Haboh* in the merit of pursuing peace. (Rav Chaim Palagi - Refuah ViChaim chapter 5 paragraph 76).

### Recite Parshas Hakarbanos

In the merit of *karbanos* one can be saved from an epidemic. Therefore, at such a time it is proper to be careful to recite *Parshas Hakarbanos*. (Rav Chaim Palagi - Refuah ViChaim chapter 5 paragraph 64, based on Bal Haturim - Shemos 12 23).

### Honoring Parents

By fulfilling the *mitzva* of honoring parents one can merit a long life (see Shemos 20 12), and in this merit one can be saved from an epidemic (Chida zt"l - Geualas Olam on Pesach Haggada).

### Do Not Act Rebelliously Towards Torah Leaders

Be careful not to act rebelliously towards Torah scholars, especially Torah leaders, for we find that an epidemic came as a result of rebelling against Dovid Hamelech. (Rav Chaim Palagi - Refuah ViChaim chapter 5 paragraph 39).

### Keep Nails Well Trimmed

One should be very careful to keep one's nails well-trimmed, especially during the time of an epidemic. (Rav Chaim Palagi - Refuah ViChaim chapter 5 paragraph 47).

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