

THE MIND CAN BE TRAINED TO LOOK AT BLUE AND SEE THE DIVINE THRONE

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Tetzaveh

The Mind Can Be Trained To Look At Blue And See The Divine Throne

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 583 -- The Bracha of Blossoming Trees. Good Shabbos!

The Talmud relates [Zevachim 88b] that the different priestly garments atone for different sins and the robe (me'il) specifically atones for lashon harah [gossip]. The Maharal explains the connection between lashon harah and the priestly garments in general and between lashon harah and the me'il specifically.

The Maharal makes two points. First, the priestly garments highlight the institution of the priesthood and priests reinforce for us the concept of the different roles that exist within the Jewish people. Judaism is a role- oriented religion. This is a politically incorrect statement in our egalitarian society. American ideology is that everyone is equal and everyone is the same -- equal rights, equal roles, equal opportunities. Anyone can become the president of the United States.

Klal Yisrael does not work like that. Not everyone can become the Kohen Gadol. One cannot even become a gatekeeper in the Beis HaMikdash if he is not a Levi. Klal Yisrael is a role-oriented religion. This applies to men and women as well. There is a distinct role for men within the Jewish religion and a distinct role for women. This too is a concept that is becoming less and less popular in western society.

A part of lashon harah, says the Maharal, stems from the fact that people do not want to accept the idea that there are differing roles for different people. A lot of lashon harah stems from our becoming intolerant of other people's roles. We cannot adjust to the fact that just because we do

things a certain way or we may be different from our neighbors or feel differently than them, that their ways or feelings or roles may not also be perfectly valid as well.

One person may have a natural inclination to be a ba'al chessed (a very kind and caring person). He is a person with a good heart. He may meet someone and ask that person for a favor. If the second person will decline his request, the first person may think very negatively of him. "What a mean person. If the tables were reversed, I would have certainly done the favor for him!" He may even be so incensed by the refusal that he will share this irritation with others and spread lashon harah about the person who turned him down.

It is true that we should all be kind, but inevitably different people have different emotions and standards when it comes to doing chessed for one another. There are people for whom chessed comes easily and there are people for whom chessed comes with great difficulty.

A person must come to the realization that there are all kinds of people in the world and not everyone must be exactly like himself in order to qualify as a person who should not be criticized.

Some people can sit down and study a whole day. Others, after sitting in one place for 20 minutes, need to take a break. Not everyone is cut out to sit and learn for 3 or 4 hours straight. One who has that ability should be praised, but one who does not have it should not be criticized.

Priestly garments reinforce to us the idea that Klal Yisrael is a role-oriented religion. We have to accept the idea that there are different roles and different personalities among individuals.

Specifically, the robe (me'il) was the garment that atoned for lashon harah. The Maharal explains that the me'il was the most striking of all the garments. It was made out of blue techeiles. When one would see the me'il, the idea that would be triggered in a person's mind is the thought pattern that is supposed to come to mind whenever one sees techeiles [Menachos 43b]: The blue techeiles reminds one of the sea. The sea reminds one of the sky. The sky reminds one of the Divine Throne (Kiseh haKavod). Thus seeing techeiles prompts one to think of the Almighty and do mitzvos.

This, says the Maharal, is the me'il's connection with lashon harah. So much of lashon harah has to do with what the mind automatically sees. The me'il demonstrates the speed of the mind. A mind can be quicker than a computer. Lashon harah has everything to do with how a person thinks and where his mind is.

We can see someone and automatically see his pros. On the other hand, we can see someone and automatically see his cons. Lashon harah is perhaps less a sin of articulating evil than it is a sin of perceiving the evil in someone else. Just like a person can be trained that if he sees blue he can think "The Divine Throne," so too a person can be trained to see an individual and think "good heartedness" and focus on all of his positive character traits. Alternatively, like anything else in life, one can see just the negative.

Everyone has both good characteristics and bad. The question is, what is a person's mind is trained

to see in his fellow man -- the good or the bad? Do we see the cup and call it half full or half empty? Lashon harah is about people who have trained themselves to see the negative.

The me'il teaches us to make positive connections when we perceive something visually. When we look at a person, we should try to see his Tzelem Elokim (G-dly Image). We should try to overlook the evil.

The Baal Shem Tov said on the pasuk [verse] "You shall love your neighbor like yourself" [Vayikra 19:18] that in considering a friend, one should consider how he views himself in the mirror. One generally is very forgiving of his own faults. He gives himself the benefit of the doubt and concludes that despite his shortcomings he is basically a good person. That, says the Baal Shem Tov, is how one should view his fellow man as well. "Yes, he has his faults. But basically he is a good person."

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Tezaveh are provided below:

- Tape # 045 - The Gartel: To Wear or Not to Wear
- Tape # 088 - Parshas Zachor and Other Purim Issues
- Tape # 136 - Purim Costumes: Anything Goes?
- Tape # 183 - Candle Lighting on Friday Night
- Tape # 229 - Purim Issues II
- Tape # 273 - Taanis Esther and the Personal Purim
- Tape # 319 - Conditional Licht Benching
- Tape # 363 - The "Mazik" on Purim
- Tape # 407 - Hesach Ha'daas and Tefillin
- Tape # 451 - How Many Shabbos Candles
- Tape # 495 - Reneging on a Tzedakah Pledge
- Tape # 539 - Matanos Le'evyonim
- Tape # 583 - The Bracha of Blossoming Trees
- Tape # 627 - Having Your Own Megillah
- Tape # 670 - A Woman's First Candle Lighting
- Tape # 715 - Parshas Zachor: More Fascinating Insights
- Tape # 759 - Printed Mezuzos?
- Tape # 803 - Late for Megillah and Other Purim Issues
- Tape # 847 - Teaching Torah to a Potential Ger
- Tape # 891 - Titzaveh -- Women and Sh'lach Manous and Matanos L'evyonim

Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit

<http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

Transcribed by [David Twersky](#) Seattle, WA;
Technical Assistance by [Dovid Hoffman](#), Baltimore, MD

RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.