

Inspired Torah perspectives for our wondrous generation

# Eilecha weekly



a member of the **jewish futures** family

ISSUE #23  
PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORA 5783

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זאת תהיה תורת המצדע ביום טהרתו והובא אל־הכהן: ויצא הכהן אל־מחוץ למחנה...

## MEKOR

VAYIKRA 14:2-3

This is the teaching regarding the *metzora*: On the day of his purification, he shall be brought to the kohen. And the kohen shall go out of the camp...

## MEANING

RASHI, CHIZKUNI, KLI YAKAR

The *metzora* may be pronounced "*tahor*" during the day, not at night. The entire process of his purification takes place during a single day. The Torah refers to the day of the *metzora*'s being brought to the kohen (prior to his healing and the purification ritual) as "the day of his purification", because it is metaphorically addressing his decision to commit to a lifestyle of goodness and "drawing close to the kohen", to study the paths of righteousness.

## MESSAGE

THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ZY" A

Hashem is constantly pulling the strings behind the scene, working to bring His lost sheep back to the flock. However, our experience is a bit different. From our side of things, it appears as if our spiritual gains are a result of our own efforts; as if we are drawing Hashem toward us instead of being pulled, effortlessly, into His warm embrace. But in truth, Our efforts to return to Hashem in *teshuvah* are just that: "*teshuvah*" – an answer to His call of infinite concern that echoes deep within the recesses of our souls.

The tzaddik teaches that our *pesukim* present these two aspects. The first *pasuk* reveals the truth from Hashem's perspective. **וְהוּבָא אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן**: The *metzora* is truly being pulled toward the "Kohen", a reference to Hashem. The second *pasuk* tells of how it appears from the sinner's perspective, **וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה**: Hashem arranges our return in a way that makes it seem to be the fruit of our own labor.

## HIDDEN TREASURE

In Parshas Tazria, Hashem tells Moshe that when the Jews enter the Holy Land, He will place צרעת on their houses. Rashi explains that, unlike other forms of צרעת, this plague was not a response to human sin. Rather, this affliction would be sent from heaven for the benefit of the homeowner. When a Jew would approach the kohen and announce, "Something like a plague has appeared on my house", the stricken abode would be rendered impure and closed up for a seven-day period, after which the stained bricks would be removed. Because the *tzara'as* appeared on a section of the wall behind which the Emorites had hidden money and other valuables, the removal of the bricks would reveal treasures that would then become possessions of the homeowner. According to the Ramban, this plague was entirely unnatural; its appearance guaranteed the presence of a treasure behind the plagued bricks.

In the year 1940, the holy Piacezner Rebbe Hy" d asked the following question to his battered congregants in the Warsaw Ghetto: If the sole purpose of this form of צרעת was to reveal the hidden treasure as explained by Rashi and accentuated by the Ramban, why did the house need to be deemed impure and sealed off for seven days? Why couldn't the kohen simply tear down the wall straight away?

Chazal teach that whatever happens to a person is for his ultimate spiritual betterment – "כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד". This means that all trials and tribulations of the human experience are intended to aid us in our personal journey toward closeness with the Master of the world. While not always easy to apply, it is simpler for us to understand how this rule manifests in day-to-day annoyances such as a missed bus, a broken-down car, a failed business endeavor, or an illness. However, when the difficulty we encounter is *religious* in nature, it becomes far more difficult for us to understand how this could possibly be heaven-sent in order to aid our growth.

Unable to pray in a shul or visit the mikvah, forced to enter Succos without *dalet minim*, and having no menorah to light on the first night of Chanukah – these tragic difficulties seem to impede our growth, trampling on our *avodas Hashem* and stomping it into oblivion. Can there be a glimmer of light even here, in the spiritual desolation of a Warsaw Ghetto, in the crippling conditions of challenges that prevent us from serving Hashem in the way our souls yearn to serve Him?

The holy Aish Kodesh teaches that the answer is to be found in the laws regarding צרעת on a house. If the kohen were to break down the wall immediately after the צרעת appeared, this would perhaps teach that everything, even leprosy, is for the purpose of revealing a hidden treasure. However, the introduction of impurity into the process broadens the lesson dramatically: **even heaven-sent impurity manifest in impassible spiritual obstacles that lead to a treasure in the end.** This is why instead of saying "A plague appeared on my house", the homeowner would say "Something like a plague..." As limited human beings, we are not privy to understanding the true nature of things – even those things that seem unjust and negative. All we can ever say is "Something like...", acknowledging that despite how a given situation may appear, we believe it is ultimately for the good. One day we will understand that even a crisis represented by the inability to properly serve Hashem itself paves the way for the most awesome, incomprehensible spiritual treasure.

**ALL CHALLENGES - EVEN IMPASSABLE OBSTACLES ALONG THE ROAD TOWARD CLOSENES WITH HASHEM - ARE FOR THE PURPOSE OF OUR ULTIMATE SPIRITUAL BETTERMENT.**

- The Piacezner Rebbe Hy" d



# Soothing our Speech with Shabbos

Based on a teaching of the Noam Elimelech & Rav Avraham Tzvi Kluger



אָדָם כִּי יִהְיֶה בְעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ שְׂאֵת אוֹ סַפְחָת אוֹ בְהָרַת וְהָיָה בְעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ לְנֹגַע צָרַעַת...

ויקרא  
יגב

The verse mentions three types of afflictions of the skin.

The *Noam Elimelech* connects the names of these three spiritual maladies to three negative traits with the same root letters:

בְהָרַת	סַפְחָת	שְׂאֵת
בְהִירוּת Assuredness from some experience, to the point of being a 'know-it-all'.	הַסְתַּפְחוּת Connectivity/assigning oneself to empty people or negative influences.	הַתְנַשְּׂאוֹת Arrogance, which is the root of all negative <i>middos</i> .

Rav Kluger, in *מרפא לשון*, discusses ways that Shabbos functions as a *refuah* and *tikkun* for our speech, based on the verses, below. [Though Rav Kluger does not connect them as antidotes to the negative traits above, לעניות דעתי, a linkage exists]:

אִם-תִּשָׁיֵב מִשְׁכַּת רַגְלְךָ עֲשׂוֹת חֲפָצֶךָ בַּיּוֹם קִדְשֵׁי וְקִרְאָתָהּ לְשִׁכַת עֲנֵג לְקֹדֶשׁ ה' מְכַבֵּד וְכַבְּדוֹתוֹ מִעֲשׂוֹת דְרָכֶיךָ מִמְצוֹא חֲפָצֶךָ וְדַבֵּר דְבָר: אֶזְתַּעֲנֵג עַל ה' וְהִרְכַּבְתִּיךָ עַל כַּמְתִּי אֶרֶץ וְהֶאֱכַלְתִּיךָ נַחֲלַת יַעֲקֹב אָבִיךָ כִּי פִי ה' דִּבֵּר:

ישעיהו  
נח:יג-יד

רגלך   הליכה	ענג   נגע
<p>Shabbos involves a big aspect of הליכה/ walking. The quality of our Shabbos <i>menucha</i> (which means far more than 'rest') is strongly tied to where we direct our 'walkings', i.e., our destinations, thoughts and intentions on Shabbos.</p> <p>On the words "מעשות דרכיך" from the above verse, Gemara Shabbos 113a states: <i>שלא יהא הילוכך של שבת כהילוכך של חול</i> - our 'walking' on Shabbos should not be like our 'walking' during the week. (We also have travel limitations - תחומים).</p>	<p>Many commentators point out that the same letters can be used to spell two seemingly polar opposite words: <b>ענג</b> / delight &amp; <b>נגע</b> /affliction</p> <p>It may be difficult, and sometimes impossible, for the human eye to see any positivity or delight in an affliction. Hopefully, at least for the relatively minor afflictions, we can see them as a means of Hashem (lightly) urging us to reconsider certain decisions and return to the proper path.</p>
<p>The prohibition of רכילות/gossip is couched in 'walking' terms: <b>"Do not walk about as a gossip... / לא תלך רכיל בעמריך /"</b></p> <p>The <i>tikkun</i> of improper and <i>chol</i>-like 'walking' is the fitting and elevated <i>menucha</i> and spiritual destinations of our Shabbos.</p>	<p>The <i>Chiddushei HaRim</i> homiletically interprets the words עינו הפך הנגע את עינו to mean that that "the affliction did not change its עין/eye". The only difference between ענג and נגע is the placement of the letter ע. Whether something is an affliction or a pleasure, all depends on <b>perspective/the eye</b>.</p>

Shabbos is a time to sit within our "ד' אמות", enjoying יחודים עם עצמו, ישוב הדעת, שלום עם עצמו, - from the perspective we gain on Shabbos, we can more readily contemplate the importance of אהבת ישראל, and intensify our desire for unity.

אִם-תִּשָׁיֵב מִשְׁכַּת רַגְלְךָ	וְקִרְאָתָהּ לְשִׁכַת עֲנֵג
<p>If our 'feet' are in a place of tranquility and we're looking for balance and integration with our surroundings, that means we're not agitated with ourselves or the world around us. Therefore, we won't be couriers of gossip. Instead, our 'walkings' can be pursuits of: <b>דְרָכֶיךָ דְרָכֵי נַעַם וְכָל נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שְׁלוֹם</b></p>	<p>If we're properly attuned, Shabbos grants us inner peace, <i>menucha</i>, and personal satisfaction, which opens our eyes to <b>see the good in others</b>. A healthier, more loving attitude toward our fellow man diminishes the urge to speak evil. Eliminating arrogance, allows us to make room for others.</p>

The *primiyus* of *oneg* Shabbos is to **flip** any נגה from the week/bad feelings/*lashon hara* into **ענג**. We use the *menucha* of Shabbos to change how we view ourselves and others, **walking along the 'מי מנוחות' of inner peace and kind speech**.