

# אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר...



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*Inside:*

## **Pain of the Soul**

by Rabbi Berel Wein

## **All For the Good**

by Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

## **Allowing in the Light**

by Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

*and more...*



**RABBI YY JACOBSON**  
*will NOT be in town for Shabbos*

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbaim

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**Tzvi Blech**



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## Shabbos Zmanim

2024 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main  
at מנחה גדולה and every 15 minutes from 1:30pm-5:00pm

7:15pm Candle lighting	7:25pm Mincha in tent א	7:25pm Chabad Mincha	7:33pm Shkiya
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**SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:**

5:40am <small>Vasikin, followed by 2 Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑</small>	8:00am Shachris 2 18 main	9:15am Shachris 3 Tent א	10:00am Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑	10:00am Shachris 5 18 main
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2:00pm Pirchei	7:15pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	7:34pm Shkiya	8:14pm Maariv 1	8:19pm Maariv 2
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Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!  
9:00 pm – 11:30pm | 18 Main

## Weekday Zmanim

Zmanim for the week of April 14-20

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz  
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	6:18am	8:53am	9:37am	10:43am	12:56pm	6:12pm	7:35pm
Monday	6:17am	8:52am	9:36am	10:43am	12:56pm	6:13pm	7:36pm
Tuesday	6:15am	8:51am	9:35am	10:42am	12:56pm	6:14pm	7:37pm
Wednesday	6:14am	8:50am	9:34am	10:41am	12:56pm	6:15pm	7:38pm
Thursday	6:12am	8:49am	9:33am	10:41am	12:55pm	6:15pm	7:40pm
Friday	6:11am	8:48am	9:32am	10:40am	12:55pm	6:16pm	7:41pm
Shabbos	6:09am	8:47am	9:32am	10:39am	12:55pm	6:17pm	7:42pm

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# Nega and Oneg

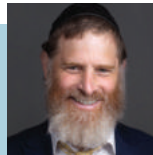
The world that we live in is quite different from the rest of the nations of the world. The Jewish world follows an order that night comes before the day, while other nation's day precedes night. Metaphorically speaking, the darkness or difficult times comes before the good times. People that live a life that day comes before the night might have a good time but as time passes and they don't accomplish or accumulate, their world only gets darker.

When living night preceding day, the reality is that before day break it's the darkest moment in time. When we experience painful times, it's important to know in the darkest hour to hang in there as this is the sign that it's almost over, dawn will break soon. Anything of great worth is earned through toil and challenges. Imagine a world where you can buy children in Walmart for \$19.99 (at least there is a good return policy – save the receipt!), would children have value? The more the pain, the more the appreciation and pleasure for what was obtained. The Chasam Sofer explains that Haggar had Yishmael with Avraham immediately, while Sara had to wait 70 years. This was because in order to have a Yishmael, you don't need preparation, but to have a Yitzchak, you need 70 years of *tefilla*.

The Parasha speaks of two subjects that seem to have nothing in common: having children and the laws of *tzaraat*. Children are a good thing and *tzaraat*, not so much fun. The lesson is to depict the contrast of the two ways of life. A long term investment, which has tremendous gains over time, versus short term pleasure of gossip that eventually leaves one alone and friendless. When one receives *tzaraat*, he is sent out of the camps to live alone. You may enjoy the moment of knocking someone, or feel elevated when speaking down about a person, but it's only temporary. Ultimately this pleasure will cause much sorrow and loneliness because what goes around comes around. Long term pleasure comes with having children, although difficult at times, (ok, lots of times!) the joy and satisfaction of building a better world, and an extension of one's self, is enormous.

The word for pleasure in the torah is *oneg*, spelled *ayin, nun, gimel*. The word for extreme pain is *nega; nun, gimel, ayin*. The gossip is an individual that chooses *nega* over *oneg*, one that puts his *ayin tova* last and not first.

We live at a time where there is a silent cry radiating from the hearts and souls of our fellow Jews. These people live in shadows and shade and do not see a future of light. How can we transform someone's darkness and help them hang on until dawn breaks? Sometimes a validating and listening ear can help lighten a heavy burden. Let's all resolve to be sensitive and aware of others who may need our attention and care. Let's make sure no one ever feels alone like a person with *tzaraat*, removed from the camp or the community. May we all be spared of any *nega* and only be blessed with an abundance of *oneg*.



# The Solar Eclipse

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

On Monday, April 8, many areas of North America will experience what science calls a solar eclipse. The question arises: as Jews what spiritual or *halachic* significance is there for such an event? If you look in the *Igros Kodesh* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe this question was raised, specifically whether one would recite a *bracha* like *בראשית מעשה* similar to what happens every 28 years when the sun returns to the beginning of its cycle. The answer is a resounding no, there is no *bracha*. Seemingly there is no *mitzvah* associated with this event. The only thing that we see from the Gemara in Sukka 29 is that it's a sign of warning for the non-Jews that they better mend their ways or else...

In truth, there are three opinions in the Gemara and the question still stands: what about the Jews? I think that when we recall the Gemara in *Taanis* that spells out the source of all trouble in the world and basically sends the address to none other than the Jewish people. As the Gemara says *הלא כארבע אתכם* the Jews are spread throughout the world, and in the same way the winds affect the world, so do the Jewish people affect the world. So when the UN or other "great friends" of the Jews blame us for this and that, in essence they are right; we are responsible for the world we believe and we were given the mission of *tikkun olam*, and when we do what we're supposed to do, we will turn this world around into a beautiful and perfect world, something which we hope to see fulfilled very soon.

There is a basic question that many of the great Rabbis like the *Nodah B'yehuda* and Rav Yonasan Eibeshitz and others ask: how can the solar eclipse be a sign for anything if, after all, it's all scientifically predicted? The answer lies in the powerful essay of the *Bais Halevi* - essay 18. The Bais Halevi presents a novel approach to viewing historical events. He explains as an example that Chazal tell us that because of the jealousy between the brothers over Yosef's *ketones pasim* we ended up in Mitzrayim. The Bais Halevi says many people make a mistake in understanding this passage. Yes, Chazal tell us that the brothers' jealousy is the cause. However, in truth, there was a decree even before that that we would go down to Mitzrayim. It's just that Hashem orchestrated the cause to be the jealousy of the brothers, so that when we look at the going down to Egypt, we need to focus on *ahavas Yisrael* to get out of Mitzrayim.

The principle of the Bais Halevi explains to us what we need to do and think when seeing and experiencing an eclipse. It also lays a solid foundation of what it means to have true *emuna* and *bitachon*

So how does all this relate to *tzara'as*?

The answer lies in the famous words of the *Chinuch* and the Rambam in *Hilchos Taanis* and in *Hilchos Tumas Tzara'as*. It also connects beautifully to the *Haftorah* of parshat Tazria. which describes a conversation that took place between the Navi and Naaman, the non-Jewish officer who was suffering from a form of *tzara'as*. How does this all tie together? Stay tuned.



Rabbi YY Jacobson

A number of times, the Torah discusses the possibility of bringing turtledoves or young doves as an offering to G-d. In each of these instances, the Torah first mentions the turtledove (*tor*, in Hebrew), and only afterward the young dove (*ben yonah*, in Hebrew). Thus, our *parsha*, when discussing the offering brought by the *yoledet* possessing lesser means, the Torah states, "She shall take two turtledoves or two young doves," first mentioning the option of offering turtledoves, and only afterward the option of young doves.

There is, surprisingly, one exception. In our *parsha*, while discussing the offering presented by the *yoledet* of greater means, the Torah states "She shall bring a sheep within its first year for an elevation offering, and a young dove or a turtledove." Here, suddenly, the order is changed. First the young dove, and only afterward the more mature turtledove. Why?

## Pairs

The Baal Haturim offers a simple but profoundly moving two-line answer.

Wherever a bird offering is mentioned throughout the Torah, says Rabbi Jacob, it is always in the context of a **pair** of turtledoves or a **pair** of young doves. The above quote is one example: "But if she cannot afford a sheep, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young doves." Birds are offered in pairs.

The only exception is the woman after childbirth who possesses greater means, who offers one sheep and **one** bird. Here the Torah states, "She shall bring a sheep... and a young dove or a turtledove." The Torah, in this instance, changes the order of the birds, first mentioning the young dove, then the older turtledove.

The Torah teaches us that in a case when a **single** bird is offered, preference should be given to the young dove over the older mature dove. The older turtledove should only be brought as a last resort, if a young dove could not be found. This requirement doesn't apply when a **pair** of birds is offered together.

## The Loyalty of the Dove

Although most animals are non-monogamous, there are a few exceptions; one of them is the dove. Many (though not all) birds of the dove family are loyal to their mates, sometimes over many seasons and even years.

In fact, the Talmud states that if the Torah had not been given, we would have learned how to be loyal to our spouses from the behavior of doves.

The passionate words expressed by the groom to his bride in the *Song of Songs* "Behold, you are lovely my beloved; behold you are beautiful, your eyes are doves," are understood in the Midrash as G-d's profound compliment to the Jewish people. "Just as a dove, from the moment it recognizes its partner, never exchanges it for anybody else, so the Jewish people, from the moment they recognized G-d, never substituted Him with any other deity."

That is why in the case of a woman offering only **one** dove, the Torah urges us to avoid taking a single mature dove as an offering, since we might be depriving its partner from his or her mate. The preference must be the **young** dove that has not yet begun to mate. In all other instances, though, where the instruction is to offer **two** doves, no partner need lose its mate, hence the Torah does not give preference to the young doves over the mature doves.

## The Lesson

This conveys a profound lesson on the sensitivity the Torah demands of us toward feelings of animals, even toward a bird left over after its mate has been offered to G-d. Certainly, it tells us how we must honor the dignity and feelings of a fellow human being. How much more must we deeply honor and cherish the emotions and experiences of our partners in life.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)  
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)  
**Shabbos**: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)  
Morning 8:40 (20 Upstairs) | After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)  
*Please Note: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 am, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 am.*

## Sight and Speech: *From the Metzora to the Seder Night*

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

Seeing and speaking play a pivotal role in the process of evaluating *tzora'as*. The phrase, "*v'ra'ah hakohen* - and the kohen will see", appears in *Tazria* numerous times. A *metzora* can only begin his purification when the kohen sees that the *tzora'as* has healed. The kohen seeing the *tzora'as* is so integral to ascertaining its status that the one cannot report to the kohen with certainty that he himself has seen *tzora'as*, rather the Torah insists that he merely state "*k'negah nirah li b'bayis* - what seems like *tzora'as* is in my house."

The second critical component in deciding an issue of *tzora'as* is the kohen's speech. Even if the kohen is convinced that it is *tzora'as* that he is seeing, as long as a formal declaration hasn't been made the person's clothing or house remains pure. Thus the procedure for declaring the house to be impure is delayed until its contents have been emptied to avoid their becoming *tamey* as well, thereby avoiding an unnecessary loss of possessions for the homeowner.

What message is being sent to the *metzora* as he observes the eyes and mouth of the kohen deciding his future? He is being taught the lesson that he most needs for his spiritual improvement: it was his eyes and mouth that brought the *metzora* to this state.

*Chazal* speak of the deficiency of the "eyes" of the *metzora*. His jealousy upon seeing others' successes caused him to speak evil. There is a direct correlation between these sins of sight and speech, and as such the *metzora* must now learn the power of sight and speech. Just as he caused harm by looking and speaking

evil about others, his home, clothing, and even his body are being scrutinized by the eyes and mouth of the kohen.

Our eyes and mouths are not only capable of harm, but can also be utilized for great good. The central theme of the seder night is *v'higadeta l'bincha*. The telling of *yetzias Mitzrayim* to our children is accomplished by using our eyes and mouths properly. "*Ba'avor zeh*", one sees the *korban Pesach*, *matzoh* and *maror* and formulates the story around these visual reminders. *Chazal* instituted many practices at the *seder* so the children will see and ask.

Not only is the annual *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* done through the power of sight and speech, but our entire *mesorah* is transmitted using these two powerful vehicles. We must show our children what a life of Torah is. They must see with their own eyes what Torah means to us. The image of how we learn, *daven* and observe *mitzvos* must accompany them throughout life. Even Yosef had to conjure up the image of his father from his youth to enable him to withstand the challenge of an alien environment. We teach our children by transmitting the words of Torah from our mouths to theirs. Accompanying this oral transmission are the powerful images we show our children.

Our potential to use sight and speech is so great, therefore we must always assure that our eyes and mouths are fit for this monumental task. We must be certain that we and our children look with an *ayin tova* and our mouths utter *lashon tova* to enable us to use the gifts of sight and speech for the wonderful tasks for which they were created.



We have seen that *halacha* dictates that we do not even start saying the *hagadda*, before nightfall. But what about getting a jumpstart, and reciting *kiddush* a little early? Is there anything wrong with that? That would definitely help move things along!

It is interesting to point out that the Chasam Sofer, in one place, actually suggests that one can make *kiddush* early. However, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules that even *kiddush* must be recited after nightfall. Why is that?

### There are a number of reasons given for this:

1. The Taz explains that this is not because of the seder per se, but because *kiddush* must be recited at a time when the meal can be eaten. The Pri Megadim explains that this is because *kiddush* is the beginning of the meal, and must be recited at a time that the meal – tonight beginning with the *matza* and the *maror* – can be eaten, which is after nightfall.
2. The Magen Avraham quotes a Terumas Hadeshen that explains that since *kiddush* is one of the four cups, and is part and parcel of the evening's program, it must be recited at a time that the seder can take place.
3. The Brisker Rav explains that since the drinking of the cup is to show that we became free, it must be drunk at night, when we were freed.

*Davening Maariv*, however, can be done earlier, and there is no need to wait for nightfall, but then *Shma* should be repeated after nightfall.

### Reciting the Hagadda on Shabbos Hagadol

The Rama writes that the *minhag* is to recite the *hagadda* on Shabbos Hagadol. The Gra takes issue with this *minhag*, based on the words of the *hagadda* that it must be recited specifically on the night of Pesach, and not earlier. Although this is not to fulfill the *mitzvah*, just as a "practice run," the Gra seemingly understood that this is not just the time to perform the *mitzvah*, but actually an *issur* to say it before.

The Yaavetz also asserts that one should not say the *hagadda* on Shabbos Hagadol. He adds that even if it is not an *issur*, it should not be said earlier, keeping the text fresh and exciting.

### Children Being Up

How long should we keep the children awake by the seder? The Mishna Berura writes that the main objective is that they ask the questions of the *ma nishtana* and hear the answer. But he also mentions that it may be better for them to stay up until the eating of the *matza*, so they will actually see the *mitzvos* in action.

### Summary

One cannot even recite *kiddush* before nightfall, because *kiddush* must be recited at a time that the meal can be eaten, because *kiddush* is one of the four cups, or because it must be drunk as free people.

Some have the custom to recite the *hagaddah* on Shabbos Hagadol, although some *poskim* others are against it.

Children should stay up at least until they hear the answer to the Ma Nishtana, and preferably until the eating of the *matza*.

*There are a number of Kuntreisim available – both in English and in Hebrew, including: 1. Baking Matzos 2. Mechiras Chometz 3. Leil Haseder and Daled Kosos*  
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### Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara
- Currently: מסכת פסחים, פרק ערבי פסחים
- Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha
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- Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm

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### UFARATZTA



On one's birthday, he should seclude himself and recall his experiences and think about them. Whatever needs correction and *teshuvah*, he should realign and correct.

==== Hayom Yom Nisan 11

11th of Nisan, the Rebbe's yom huledes, 1902.

## Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

CELL: 845-499-6354



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Weekly

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## Did You Come Before the Gnat?

**Vayikra Rabbah 14:1** - "Rebbe Simlai said: Just as the creation of man was after the animal, beast, and bird, so is his Torah recorded after the animal, beast and bird. Thus, it is written: This is the law of the animal, and after that it says: When a woman conceives." The *parshiyos* prior to this were all about man, and the *korbonos* that man is to bring. It is only after all of this that the animals are mentioned. So while yes, after speaking about the animals it discusses man, but it has already discussed man before the animals.

We can explain this based on the *Midrash* in *Vayikra Rabbah* 14:1 which says, "אחור וקדם צרתני" – that man was created both in the beginning and at the end. This means that the *nefesh* of a person was created before everything else, and the *guf* was created on the sixth day of Creation, after everything else.

The *Midrash* says, Reish Lakish said, "If a man is worthy, the *Malachim* say to him: You preceded all the work of Creation. But if one is not worthy, they say to him: The gnat preceded you; the earthworm preceded you." When it says, "If a man is worthy," it means that if a man makes it that his *nefesh* is in control of his *guf*, the *guf* is just secondary, then we say to him, "You preceded all the work of Creation," for he is looked

at as a *nefesh*, and that was created before all. If one is not *zoche*, which means that he allows his *guf* to be in control, and his *nefesh* is secondary to his *guf*, then we tell him, "The gnat preceded you; the earthworm preceded you" – for he is looked at as a *guf*, and that was created at the end, on the sixth day of creation.

Now we can explain why the Torah first speaks much about man, then animal, and then man again. First the Torah speaks about man, that is in reference to the *nefesh* of man, created first. The Torah tells us how the *nefesh* can be pure, and receive a *kapparah* when needed, so that the *nefesh* can reign. It is all about the *nefesh*. When the Torah speaks about man after the speaking about the animals, that is in reference to the man – the *guf*, the body, which was created after the animals. (שם משמואל)

Times in a person's life are not equal. There are times when a person can think clearly, and he has a desire to do *avodas Hashem*, and there are times *chas v'shalom* that it is the opposite. There are times that the *nefesh* rules, and there are times that the *guf* rules. We must know, that even when *chas v'shalom* the *guf* is ruling, we can turn the time around; we can make it into a time where the *nefesh* rules. This is our *avodah*, to always seek to ensure that the *nefesh* is ruling. If *chas v'shalom* we fail, we must not give up, and we must know that we can turn it around. We can make it that once again, the *nefesh* rules.

## 5784 A Year Like No Other

This year, as we read about *tzaraas* in *Tazria* and its reason for existence (our speaking negatively of others). Let us explore the causes and cures for *lashon hara*.

In the early 1900s in Russia, Mendel Beilus was on trial in Russia. Accused of killing a young Russian boy and using his blood for ritual purposes (matzo baking), Beilus was the modern victim of a classic medieval blood libel. The Russian government had taken the legal tack of trying to convince the jury that this practice was common amongst the Jews and even sanctioned by the sages.

The clever prosecutors isolated a saying in the Talmud אתם קרויים אדם ואין עכו"ם קרויים אדם

Loosely translated as "Only the Jewish people have a right to call themselves human beings." With this statement, they were trying to prove that the killing of a non-Jew is sanctioned by the Talmud. Incredible by today's standards, but it happened!

Rav Yaakov Mazah (his last name an acronym for *Mi zera Aharon haKohein*, "from the descendants of Aharon Hakohen") was called from across the country to testify and formulate a response to this loaded accusation.

"Your honor", Harav Mazah began. "Of all the words in the Hebrew language used to describe man, the word Adam אדם is the only word which is exactly the same in both the singular and plural forms.

"Our Rabbis have chosen this word to describe man, not to, G-d forbid justify killing, but to demonstrate the high level of importance placed on unity by the Jewish People. The strongest proof of this is that I, myself, was rushed here, hundreds of kilometers from my home, to defend a Jewish man I have never

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



met before, because we are indeed one people.

"If I am not successful in his defense, then terrible pogroms could break out at any moment. This too is proof that only we, the Jewish people are considered as "one person". For even if Mr. Beilus is guilty, and he is not, but even if he were, I ask you: What crime did the entire Jewish people do, to be victimized as one?.. It follows that you too, the nations of the world, consider us as one person, one body, one connected person! One Adam."

The Alshich asks two salient questions. Why does the Torah subject only the Jewish people to the laws of speech and its consequent punishments. Furthermore, why is the word Adam אדם used in this context? Traditionally, Adam אדם is used to describe a more complete or higher form of mankind.

Following Rav Mazah – one question answers the other! The Jewish people alone are one body – we are all connected, and this idea is represented by the use of the word Adam אדם. If one speaks *lashon hara* against a Jew, we as a nation can break apart, whereas in the non-Jewish community, there is no such unity. Breaking apart a nation that is already divided warrants no punishment!

The Alshich continues, *tzaraas* must be brought to Aharon Hakohen, because there is an important lesson to be learned. One whose speech causes strife is commanded to go to Aharon Hakohen, whose days were filled with love for every Jew. He alone will teach the speaker of *lashon hara* to be filled with love for all members of the community!

Good Shabbos!

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita



## Allowing in the Light

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg



The Torah in Parshas Tazria introduces the subject of tzara'as by speaking of an אדם, a person, who has a discoloration on עור בשרו – “the skin of his flesh.” The Sefas Emes finds it significant that the Torah refers to the individual here specifically with the term אדם, and that it specifies that the affliction appears not simply on בשרו, the person's flesh, but on עור בשרו – “the skin of his flesh.” This *pasuk*, the Sefas Emes explains, brings us back to the story of Adam Ha'rishon, of his banishment from Gan Eden. After he and Chava partook of the forbidden fruit, they suddenly felt ashamed by not wearing clothing, and so God made for them כתנות עור, leather garments, for them to wear (Bereishis 3:21).

The word עור, the Sefas Emes writes, is related to the word עוור – “blind.” The garments made for Adam and Chava after their sin signifies the state of “blindness” in which human beings live ever since that tragic event. Before Adam and Chava's sin, there was a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, between what is good for us and what isn't. Temptation existed externally, as represented by the snake, a different creature that lured man to sin. Internally, however, Adam and Chava lived with clarity. After the sin, we live with עור, with “coverings” that “blind” us. We now struggle to see the difference between right and wrong; temptation makes sin, and vice seem attractive and alluring, blinding us to their evil.

However, the Sefas Emes writes, these כתנות עור, this covering, is porous. There are small holes through which light can enter to give us clarity, to resolve the confusion, to show us what is right and what is wrong. Even in our condition of “blindness,” the darkness is not complete. We have sources of light, of guidance, that clarify for us what is right and what is wrong. The Torah here warns that a נגע, a spiritual affliction, occurs when it seals עור בשרו, blocking the “perforations” in the “covering” that allow the light to enter. A person is plagued when the holes are sealed, when the “blindness” becomes complete, and he can no longer distinguish between right and wrong.

The takeaway from this deep insight of the Sefas Emes is that we must always ensure to keep the “perforations” open, to allow the light of clarity and truth into our lives. Ever since Adam and Chava's sin in Gan Eden, we live in darkness, in confusion, blinded by temptation. This is the struggle which every person must go through each day of his life. In order to successfully wage this battle, we need to allow the light in, to remain open to receiving guidance and instruction. We need to learn and to expose ourselves to those who can instruct us and show us where we need to go. If we close ourselves off to guidance, if we do not pursue knowledge or inspiration, then we thrust ourselves into total darkness, we become completely “blinded,” and will then, God forbid, experience נגעים, spiritual maladies, which can be very difficult to cure.

## Open A Kollel!

Zichru Toras Moshe

About to set out on a long-distance trip to Berlin to seek medical care, the Alter of Slabodka's dedicated talmid, R' Meir Chodosh, told his rebbi that he's coming along with him. The Alter disapproved and told him not to come, but R' Meir yearned and desired to embark on his esteemed rebbi's journey, and wouldn't take no for an answer. Secretly, he traveled there on his own.

To the best of his ability, R' Meir followed his rebbi around, but he wasn't always able to get the experience of being with his rebbi he'd hoped for, because he was doing everything behind the scenes.

On one occasion, the Alter had a dialogue with a wheelchair-bound elderly man. R' Meir couldn't make out what his rebbi was saying; all he saw was the man nodding his head.

The following day, the same scene reoccurred: the Alter was talking, and the man was nodding to all that he was saying. This time, however, R' Meir overheard the Alter:

“You understand that the heart is the central organ of the body?” he was saying. “All the body parts revolve around it. Just as the entire body revolves around the heart, so too, the entire world revolves around Torah. So, therefore, I recommend that you quickly found a new Kollel before you move on to the Next World; what a great zechus you'll have in your hands if you do so.”

After that, R' Meir could no longer avoid his rebbi; he needed to understand what the Alter was trying to convey to the elderly man. After hiding from him for a few days, R' Meir made his presence known to the Alter the next day.

The Alter greeted him with a smile. “When did you arrive?”

“I came several days ago,” he replied.

“So, where have you been?”

“I've been hiding; I didn't want to show my face.”

“What have you been doing all this time?”

“I've been standing behind the wall and overhearing the conversations taking place around you.”

“So, what did you hear?”

“That's what I came to you for. I didn't understand the conversation that you had with the elderly man. You were persuading him to establish a Kollel. Is he a rich man? Does he have the means for it? Does he have any connections with wealthy people?”

With turbulent passion, the Alter responded: “This man has nothing in his life. He has neither the money to support Torah nor any descendants learning Torah. There's one thing, and only one thing, that he has, and that is will. He can have a will to open a Kollel, and that will give him great reward in the World to Come. That's the last ray of hope for him. Should I withhold that from him?!” (Ad Alos Hashachar, p. 170)

“Dream.” This is something usually associated with unrealistic, unproductive, and unfruitful thinking. In short, something that won't come to be. But when it comes to *ruchniyus*, that is not the case. One's dreams and desires are valued by Hashem, and Hashem will grant us reward for that. There are times when we cannot fulfill our desires, and yet the desire itself is treasured. There may be times that we aren't given the capability or the physical means to actualize our dreams, but with His infinite love, Hashem grants us benefits from our dreams nonetheless.

# ALL FOR THE GOOD

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman



When a person has *tzaraas*, he is supposed to say to the kohen (14:35) כנגע נראה לי בבית, "Something like a *nega* (*tzaraas*) has appeared to me in the house." Notice the כ at the beginning of כנגע. This means that he isn't telling the kohen that he saw a definite *nega*, but instead that he saw something that appears like a *nega*. Rashi explains, "Even a Talmid chacham, who knows that it is a *nega*, shall not make his statement using a decisive expression, saying, 'A *nega* has appeared to me.' He should say, 'Something like a *nega* has appeared to me.'"

The Tosfos Yom Tov (*Negaim* 12:5) writes several explanations why one shouldn't say definitively that it is a *nega* of *tzaraas*. Here are a few of the reasons:

The Mizrahi teaches: He doesn't say that it is *tzaraas* to honor the kohen, to let the kohen decide whether it is *tzaraas* or not.

The Maharal teaches: Chazal say that until the kohen calls it a *nega*, the *tzaraas* isn't *tamei*. It only has the *tumah* of *tzaraas* once deemed a *tzaraas* by a kohen. So, it would be untrue to say it is a *nega* because it isn't yet.

Another answer is that the person shouldn't call it a *nega* because this will convince the kohen to see it that way.

The Tosfos Yom Tov then writes his own explanation. It is based on the principle that one shouldn't open his mouth to the Satan. It is wiser if he doesn't proclaim that it is a *nega* because this can cause what he says to occur. A *nega* can change colors and turn to a lighter shade and then become *tahor*. By the time the kohen sees the *tzaraas*, it might be *tahor*. But by proclaiming that it is *tzaraas* and that he is undoubtedly *tamei*, his words might cause the *tzaraas* to remain. This is as the Gemara (Moed Kattan 18.) says, ברית כרותה לשפתיים, there lies a power in words, that whatever one says can occur. And this isn't only when one says something negative. The power of speech is very significant, and saying positive things can also cause good things to happen. People tend to complain and say that things aren't going well. They would be wiser to get into the practice of saying that everything is good. Their words can cause change for the better.

Reb Shlomo Kluger zt'l says that this is the reason we say יהי רצון on Rosh Hashanah night by the *simanim*. We verbalize that it will be a sweet year, and our words create that reality. The Gemara (*Brachos* 60:) states, "One should always say, 'Everything Hashem does is for the good.'"

Once, Reb Akiva came to a city and asked for a place to stay overnight, and no one took him in. He proclaimed, "Everything Hashem does is for the good." He didn't complain. He believed and said that it was all for his benefit. He slept outdoors that night, in the fields outside the city. He had a rooster, donkey, and candle with him. A wind blew out the candle, a cat ate the rooster, and a lion ate the donkey. Reb Akiva said, "Everything Hashem does is for the good."

Thieves came to the city that night, and everyone was taken captive. Reb Akiva was saved because he wasn't in the city and didn't have a donkey, rooster, or candle that would give away where he was staying. Reb Akiva told his students, "Didn't I tell you 'everything Hashem does is for the good'?"

What was Reb Akiva telling his students?

The Ben Ish Chai (*Ben Yohoyada*) explains that he was showing them that even if there is a *gezeirah* for something terrible to occur (and perhaps it was decreed that he, too should be in captivity), by saying that it is good, his positive words can reverse it and it becomes good.

## Passover Overreaction

By Emuna Braverman

One of my children (who shall remain nameless but knows perfectly well who she is!) upended a large tray of cookies onto the living room couch the other night. "Pesach is coming!" I shrieked.

"But the room isn't yet cleaned for *chametz*," she pleaded. "What's the big deal?"

I polled my friends. Did I overreact?

"I would have been over the edge if it happened in October," said one. "Definitely nervous breakdown material," nodded another.

I calmed down but erupted again when the same child (I hope you're reading this!) sat eating crackers (very crumbly ones I might add) in the aforementioned living room.

And yet I know it's irrational. The house will get cleaned -- even if I have to do it myself! (Oh yeah, I do! No wonder I'm frustrated...) The crumbs will be swept or brushed or vacuumed away. We will, please God, sit down to a delicious meal on Passover night in a *chametz*-free environment.

The only question is: What state I will be in when we get there (and along the way)? The real couch is our character; the real crumbs, our negative traits. If I spend the preparation time yelling at my children, am I really getting rid of the *chametz*? We are taught that the *chametz*/leaven symbolizes ego. The real clean-up is a spiritual one.

If I am on edge and testy with everyone as we get ready for the holiday, then I've missed the point. If our home is physically clean but spiritually a mess, then my preparations are incomplete. If I don't sit down to the *Seder* with a smile on my (tired) face, then my home is still full of *chametz*.

So I'm regrouping. I'm taking a deep breath. I'm taking many deep breaths (I'm hyperventilating!) I'm focusing on the atmosphere I want to create and the person I'd like to be.

I may still get frustrated (who put the Cheerios in my eyeglass case?!). I may be a little tense (What cabinet did that cup come out of?), but I'm trying to be better. I'm really trying to get rid of my *chametz*. I haven't succeeded yet but I'm asking the A-mighty for help. Maybe this is the year I will truly become free.

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# Pain of the Soul

Rabbi Berel Wein



The laws regarding ritual purity and the metaphysical disease of *tzoraat*, which, by the way, is not the medically recognized disease of leprosy, affect three categories of human life and society – the human body, clothing and houses. These three areas of human societal existence are the basic building blocks of civilization and society generally. They are the most vital and at the same time the most vulnerable areas of our existence. And it is apparent that the Torah wishes us to be aware of this fact.

Health of the body is a necessary precedent to most cases of human accomplishment. Not many of us are able to rise over illness, pain and/or chronic discomfort on a regular and permanent basis. Medical science recognizes that our mood and our mind affect our physical state of wellbeing. The Torah injects into this insight that our soul also has such an effect as well.

The rabbis specifically found that the distress caused to one's soul by evil speech, slander and defamation reflects itself physically in the disease of *tzoraat*. In biblical times, hurting other human beings by the intemperate use of one's tongue had clear physical consequences that served as a warning of the displeasure of one's soul at such behavior. The human body is our mainstay. It is also the most fragile and vulnerable to decay and discomfort. It is only logical that it is in this area of our existence that the possibility of *tzoraat* lurks and lingers.

Clothing represents our outer representation of ourselves to the society around us. Originally, as described in the Torah itself, clothing was meant to shelter us from the elements and to provide us with a sense of privacy and modesty in covering our nakedness. As humanity evolved and developed, clothing became a statement of personality and even of the mental and spiritual nature of the person.

Clothing also became an instrument of hubris, competitiveness and even of lewdness. It also became vulnerable to the distress of the soul over its use for essentially negative purposes. And in biblical times, the angst of the soul translated itself into *tzoraat* that affected clothing directly.

And finally, *tzoraat* was able to invade the physical structure of one's dwelling place, as we see in next week's *parsha*. One is entitled to live in a comfortable and attractive home. All of the amenities of modern life are permitted to us. But the Psalmist warned us that we should be careful not to make our homes our "graves." Homes, by their very nature, are temporary and transient places.

Our father Avraham described himself as a wandering itinerant on this earth. Again, as in all areas of human life, the Torah demands of us perspective and common sense when dealing with our homes. We gawk with wonder when visiting palaces and mansions of the rich and famous yet our inner self tells us that this really is not the way that we wish to live. The vulnerability of homes and houses to *tzoraat* is obvious to all.

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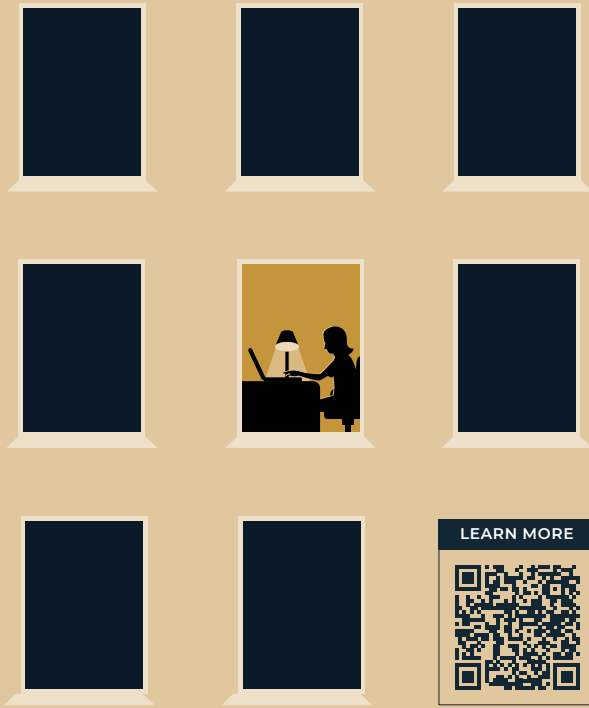


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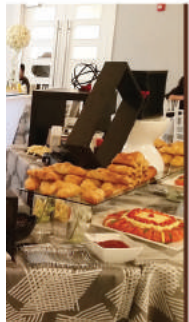
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# JOKES

## Mussar in the Jokes Section

(you have been warned :))

### THINGS HASHEM WON'T ASK

~ Hashem won't ask what kind of car you drove, He'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.

~ Hashem won't ask the square footage of your house, He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

~ Hashem won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet, He'll ask how many you helped to clothe.

~ Hashem won't ask what your highest salary was, He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.

~ Hashem won't ask what your job title was, He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of our ability.

~ Hashem won't ask how many friends you had, He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.

~ Hashem won't ask in what neighborhood you lived, He'll ask how you treated your neighbors.

~ After 120 years, at the gates of Gan Eden, you won't be asked for a check; you'll be asked for receipts.

## Feet Up

A Navy officer was cutting through the crew's quarters of his ship one day and happened upon a sailor reading a magazine with his feet up on the small table in front of him.

"Sailor! Do you put your feet up on the furniture at home?" the officer demanded.

"No, sir, but we don't land airplanes on the roof either."

## What happens?

Little boy: "Mommy, what happens when a car gets so old and rusty that it won't move anymore?"

Mom: "Someone sells it to your father."

## In a rush

The doctor was reviewing some results from a routine blood test with me during my checkup, then he took my blood pressure. "Were

you in a hurry this morning?" he asked.

Contemplating the worst, I replied, "No, as a matter of fact, I sat quietly in the waiting room, reading and very relaxed. Why? Is my blood pressure off the scales?"

"No," replied the doctor, "you're wearing your jacket inside out."

## Why My Children Don't Need More Toys

~ They started off as babies who found my Tupperware drawer much more fascinating than their toy box.

~ The days I change the paper towel roll in the kitchen bring great excitement as they claim their new sword or telescope.

~ Their current toys are only exciting when I either reorganize them/put them neatly away or when I start my garage sale pile.

~ Who needs toys when jumping on my bed like five little monkeys brings tears of laughter?

~ They are content to look at the clouds and find shapes – most recently Yitzie claimed he saw Sponge Bob. Really, just shouted it out while in the car.

~ To make one of them want to play with a toy, all I have to do is give it to the other one. Suddenly, that item becomes the best thing in the whole entire world.

~ The days I mop the kitchen floor and move the chairs into the living room are cause for adventure as they build tents and "dark, dark rooms."

~ A flashlight brings amusement to all for hours.

~ And my personal favorite – the other day they literally fought over who got to play with the fly swatter. I really wish I was kidding.



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the wrong  
number, why  
did you answer  
the phone?

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