

במחשבות

# *The Way of Emunah*

Collected Thoughts  
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar  
Rosenbaum shlita**

**Tazria - Metzorah**

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## Parshas Tazria - Metzorah

### Parshas Tazria

Saying Shira Even in Hard Times/Screaming While Davening/Torah L'Shmah Uplifts Torah Shelo L'Shmah/One Proper Tefillah Uplifts All Tefillos/Reward for Tzedakah Shelo L'Shmah/The Neshama Agrees to Come to This World for the Mitzvah of Milah/The Reason Milah is on the Eighth Day/Mesiras Nefesh for Milah in Russia/The Rambam Was Saved in the Merit of Milah/The Mitzvah of Milah is Greater Than Shabbos/Judgment for the Nations of the World/The Inner Heart of a Jew is Pure/Mockery Leads to Heresy/Sins Cannot be Hidden From a Tzadik/Negaim Come Because of Lashon Hara/Rechilus Will ultimately be Heard by the One Who Was Spoken About/The Power of Caring for Others

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**10 Iyar – The Yahrzeit of Rav Dovid of Tolna Zy" a**

**Trust in Hashem, Not in Money**

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וְיִלְדָה זָכָר וְשָׂמְאָה שְׁבַעַת יָמִים  
וּגו' (יב, ב)

Speak to the children of Yisroel, saying: When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male... (12:2)

## Saying Shira Even in Hard Times:

The Medrash Rabbah (14:1) states: “This is as is stated (Tehillim 139:5): ‘*Achor v’kadim tzartani*. Back and forth, you shaped me.’ Reish Lakish said: ‘Back’ is the final day, ‘and front,’ this is the first day. If a person merits, they say to him: ‘You preceded the entire act of Creation.’ If not, they say to him: ‘The gnat preceded you, the worm preceded you.’” Rav Menachem Mendel of Amshinov *zy”a* explained, “Even a gnat or a worm will completely confuse and frighten such a person.”

His intent is that there are people who only are calm and collected when they can see the light of success. They only are able to praise Hashem, daven to

Him and learn Torah in easy times. When they face any discomfort, even if it is merely a gnat buzzing near them, they become completely disconcerted and they are unable to daven or learn.

This is the defining trait of a person. **If he can say *shira* to Hashem at any time, even when things are hard, it is a sign that his intentions are *l’sheim shomayim*.** If one only praises Hashem when times are easy, however, it is a sign that his intentions are not *l’sheim shomayim* and he only serves for his own benefit.

In this vein, the Kotzker Rebbe explained the Gemara (Sanhedrin 92B) that says that Nevuchadnetzar, king of Bavel, wanted to say *shira* to Hashem

for granting him success in conquering Eretz Yisroel but the Malach Gavriel came and slapped him on the mouth. Rav Yitzchok says that Gavriel poured boiling gold into his mouth. The Gemara adds that if the angel had not slapped him, he would have said so many praises to Hashem that he would have put to shame all of the *shiros* that Dovid Hamelech said in Tehillim. The Kotzker Rebbe *zy”a* asks how it was acceptable for him to be slapped on the mouth. If he wanted to praise Hashem, why wasn’t he given the opportunity to do so?

He answers that Nevuchadnetzar only wanted to say *shira* “with his crown on his head” and while he experienced no discomfort. That is not so hard as it’s easy to praise Hashem when everything is going well. Therefore, **the angel struck him in the face in order to determine**

**if he would praise Hashem even when he was in a bit of pain**, and it was determined that he would not do so. **Dovid Hamelech, on the other hand, praised Hashem even when times were difficult.** Many of the chapters of Tehillim were composed while he was fleeing his enemies and suffering greatly, which proves that even in such times, he devoted himself to serving and praising Hashem.

### **Screaming While Davening:**

The Saraf of Strelisk *zy”a* was known for his fiery, enthusiastic *tefillos*. When he davened, he would scream loudly and vigorously.

A guest from Germany once came to stay in the Rebbe’s house. In his hometown, the custom was to daven quietly and somberly. When the Rebbitzen

asked him how he liked it in Strelisk, he replied, "Everything is fine and good but there is one thing I don't understand. Why does the Rebbe scream and make so much noise when he davens? Why can't he stand still and pray quietly?"

The Rebbitzin answered, "His heart is burning within him and this causes him to scream."

The guest said, "My heart also burns within me but I still daven quietly."

The Rebbitzin stood her ground and maintained her opinion that when someone has a fire burning within them, it is natural to scream. If one does not scream, it is a sign that their heart is cold. The guest would not agree. He continued to claim that his heart also burned with passion but he manages to keep his composure.

Seeing that they would not

agree, the Rebbitzin left it at that.

On Friday afternoon, the guest handed his wallet to the Rebbitzin, asking her to put it away for him in a safe place. Right after Havdalah, he asked for his money back but she acted as if she knew nothing about it. She said, "What money? You never gave me anything."

Of course, the man disputed her and said that he had given her his wallet to watch over Shabbos but she kept telling him that he must be mistaken, as she did not have his money. Finally, the man lost his patience and he began to scream at her, "Why are you doing this to me?"

She then said to him, "Why are you yelling? Why don't you speak calmly and quietly?"

He responded, "Because you got me all heated up. I can't speak calmly when you made

me so burning mad.”

She then told him, “Listen to yourself. You just admitted that one can’t be calm and quiet when a fire is burning within him. **My husband screams during davening because that is when he is on fire, and you scream about money because that is what gets you fired up.**”

She then returned his wallet, having taught him an important lesson.

### **Torah L’Shmah Uplifts Torah Shelo L’Shmah:**

Sefer Imrei Noam explains these *pesukim* by citing the Gemara (Pesachim 50B) that states: “One should always study Torah even *shelo l’shmah* because *shelo l’shmah* leads to *l’shmah*.” This is hinted to in this *pasuk* as one who learns *Torah shelo l’shmah* means someone

who wants to receive some kind of reward for his learning. Therefore, he is like a woman, who is “*mekabel*”, as she receives things from others. The word “*tazria*” is a reference to Torah and good deeds, which are called the “offspring” of *tzadikim* (Rashi on Bereishis 6:9).

The Torah is hinting that one should not despair if he has yet to reach the level of serving Hashem purely *l’shmah*. He should know that, in the end, he will come to learn *l’shmah*, which will uplift the Torah he previously learned *shelo l’shmah* and make it considered *l’shmah* as well. The *pasuk* is saying that if a “woman”, meaning someone who is *shelo l’shmah*, is “*tazria*”, meaning he learns Torah and does mitzvos with imperfect intentions, he will ultimately come to “give birth to a boy”, meaning that he will reach a level of learning and doing

mitzvos *l'shmah*, as “a boy” represents one who is “*mashpia*”, in that he provides good influences like mitzvos that are done *l'shmah*.

### **One Proper Tefillah Uplifts All Tefillos:**

It should be added that this is true not only of Torah study, the same applies to *tefillah* as well. Once one reaches the level of davening *l'shmah*, all his previous *tefillos* are also considered to have been *l'shmah*. This is as the Tanya (Kuntres Acharon) states that there is an easy rectification for *tefillos* uttered without concentration or with foreign thoughts in one's head. Once one prays one *tefillah* with *kavannah*, all his *tefillos* from the entire year are uplifted and considered pure and perfect.

### **Reward for Tzedakah Shelo L'Shmah:**

The Imrei Noam adds that the same concept applies to tzedakah. The Gemara says (Pesachim 8A) says that if someone gives *tzedakah* “on condition that his son is healed”, he is a genuine *tzadik*. This means that even if one give's *tzedakah* with ulterior motives, he still receives reward.

The Imrei Noam says that this is hinted at in the verse: “*Isha ki tzariah.*” The word “*tazriah*” can also mean to sprout or plant, which can be a reference to *tzedakah*, as the verse (Malachi 3:10) describes *tzedakah* as something that one plants. He explains the verse to be saying that even if one gives *tzedakah* like an “*isha*”, meaning that he gives it out of a desire to receive some benefit for himself, it will still “give birth to a male”, meaning that he will still receive

reward for it, as “*zachar*”, male, blessing.  
has a *gematriah* of “*bracha*”,

וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל וְגו' (יב, ג)

On the eighth day, he shall be circumcised. (12:3)

### The Neshama Agrees to Come to This World for the Mitzvah of Milah:

Sefarim Hakedoshim explain that the *neshama's* roots are under Hashem's throne of glory, and it wishes to remain in this lofty place. It does not want to come down to this world, as it fears that it may become sullied by sin. Although it knows that it can be glorified through mitzvos and good deeds, it also knows that even these can be imperfect and can be done with impure intentions. Therefore, **the *neshama* is told that there is one mitzvah that is done with no ulterior motives. That is the mitzvah of *bris milah*, which is done to a baby that is only eight days old and which has no ulterior motives or personal**

agendas. Since it knows it will be able to do this mitzvah perfectly, it agrees to come to this world.

Accordingly, the Parshah starts by speaking about a woman who gives birth to a boy. It then explains why the baby agrees to come into this world by describing the mitzvah of *milah*.

### The Reason Milah is on the Eighth Day:

The Meforshim discuss why Hashem commanded the mitzvah of *milah* to be performed on the eighth day of life, when the baby has no intelligence and cannot have proper intentions, rather than waiting until it is capable of doing the mitzvah on

its own. The Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim) explains that the Torah is concerned about the father. The more a son grows, the closer he becomes to his father and the more the father loves the child. Therefore, it is easier on the parents for the bris to be performed when the child is still a baby and their love for him is not yet as strong.

### **Mesiras Nefesh for Milah in Russia:**

Still and all, this mitzvah displays Klal Yisroel's love of Hashem and their willingness to overcome a parents' natural tendency to protect their child from any pain. Parents do this mitzvah with joy, being *moser nefesh* to fulfill His command.

This is depicted in a story that occurred in Communist Russia, when the government forbade the Jews from keeping the Torah

and one who circumcised his son was literally risking his life. If a father was caught doing a *bris* on his son, he was sent to a labor camp in Siberia, and everyone attending a bris was in danger of arrest as well. Despite the risk, many Jews did this mitzvah in secret.

A Russian Jew recalled that he had been part of a secret minyan that attended *bris milahs*. The *minyan* consisted of a group of upright Jews who could be trusted not to reveal the secret. One day, a high-ranking official in the Russian army contacted them and invited them to a *bris milah* he was making the next day. When they came to his house, the official led them into an inner room, where a table had been set up that was replete with all types of delicacies.

A short time later, the baby was brought in and the bris was performed. After the baby was

returned to the mother, the group suddenly heard a loud cry. They ran to see what happened and found that the mother had fainted. They succeeded in resuscitating her and they asked what caused her to faint. She answered, “This boy is already over one year old. My husband and I have been waiting for an opportunity to make the *bris*. I vowed that I would not kiss my son until he had his *bris*. Whenever I felt a desire to kiss him, I thought to myself: How can I kiss a child that has not had a *bris*? I now kissed my baby for the first time, which made me so emotional that I fainted.”

This beautiful story depicts the love all Jews in all situations have for Hashem and His mitzvos.

### **The Rambam Was Saved in the Merit of Milah:**

The Yalkut Mei'am Lo'az (Koheles 10:8) relates the following incredible story:

During the Rambam's times, a new king was appointed who enacted numerous decrees against the Jews, which caused them much pain and suffering. When the Rambam heard about this, he went out and stood in the street and declared, “I am a Jew and I am a famous doctor!”

Many people heard his announcement, and sick people began lining up near him. He treated each one and provided them all with effective cures. Even those who no other doctor could help were healed by him. The king was told about what was happening and he sent a message for the Rambam to come to him. When the Rambam arrived in the palace, the king told him, “I have a medical condition that causes me a lot of pain. No doctor has been able to

help me. If you can heal me, I will make you an important government minister.”

The Rambam said, “I will do it if you promise to never kill me as long as you are alive.”

The king gave his promise and the Rambam provided him with a medicine that cured him.

The king was very happy and he appointed the Rambam to be his most powerful minister. The other ministers were quite jealous of the Jew who was receiving so much honor. They falsely libeled him to the king and asked him to kill him, and the king said that he would have him killed the next day. However, the king didn't keep his word and he did not kill the Rambam.

Ultimately, the highest-ranking minister told the king that if he didn't kill the Rambam, he would start a rebellion against him. Faced with this threat, the

king said that he didn't know what to do, as he had promised the Rambam that he would never kill him. The minister told him, “By the gates of the city, there is a pit where old tar is burned. Send a message to the foreman that if a man passes by in the morning and asks if the king's will was fulfilled, he should immediately grab him and throw him into the fire. That way, you can kill him secretly.”

Early the next morning, the king sent a message for the Rambam to come to him. When he arrived, the king told him to go to the man in charge of burning the tar and ask him if the king's will had been fulfilled. The Rambam knew nothing of the scheme being orchestrated against him, so he hurried to do as the king said. On his way, he passed by a shul and thought to himself: How can I fulfill a human king's command before I

fulfill Hashem's command? Therefore, he decided to daven Shacharis first and then to continue on his mission. He entered the shul and davened and, after davening way over, a poor man approached him and said, "I am making a *bris milah* in my house but I don't have a *mohel*. Can you please make the *bris*?"

The Rambam agreed and he went to the poor man's house for the *bris*. He served as the *mohel* and stayed for the meal until after Birchas Hamazon. Meanwhile, the minister who had slandered him went to the tar pit to see if his plan had worked. He asked the foreman if the king's will had been fulfilled and, as soon as he said these words, the worker grabbed him and threw him into the fire. When the Rambam came by a short while later, he asked the worker if the king's command

had been done, and the man showed him the burnt body of the minister. The Rambam understood what had happened and he thanked Hashem for saving his life.

He then went to report back to the king and said, "The worker at the tar pit said that the king's will has been fulfilled."

The king was surprised to see him alive. He went to investigate and discovered what had occurred. He then proclaimed, "I see that Hashem is watching out for you."

From then on, he gave the Rambam even more honor than before and ordered that no man may ever harm him.

### **The Mitzvah of Milah is Greater Than Shabbos:**

The Gemara (Shabbos 132A) learns from the *pasuk* that says

that a *bris* is held on the eighth day that a *bris* is made even on Shabbos. It is stated in the Medrash that the mitzvah of *milah* and the mitzvah of Shabbos had a debate with each other. Shabbos claimed that it is bigger than *milah* because Hashem stopped creating the world for it, as is stated (Bereishis 2:2): “And Hashem stopped on the seventh day.” *Milah* said that it is bigger than Shabbos because if not for it, the world would never have been created, as is stated (Yirmiyahu 33:25): “If not for My *bris* with the day and

the night, the statutes of Heaven and earth I would not place.”

Rav Yehuda bar Shalom compares this to a story of two ministers who frequented a king’s palace, and the people did not know which one was more important. One day, the king left his palace with his entourage and everyone say that one minister was walking in front of the other. They know understood that the one walking in front was bigger. So too, since it is ruled in halacha that *milah* overrides Shabbos, we know that the mitzvah of *milah* is greater.

אָדָם כִּי יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאת וּגּוֹ' וְהוּבָא אֶל אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ אֶל אֶחָד  
מִבְּנָיו הַכֹּהֲנִים (יג, ב)

If a man has a se'eis on the skin of his flesh... he is brought before Aharon the kohen or before one of his sons, the kohanim. (13:2)

## Judgment for the Nations of the World:

The Medrash Rabbah (15:4) says a *moshol* of noblewoman who enters the palace of the king

and sees a whip hanging on the wall. This made her scared but the king calmed her and said, “Don’t worry. This is for the slaves. You, however, can eat, drink and rejoice here.”

So too, when the Yidden heard about the *nega'im*, they got scared. Moshe Rabenu then told them, “Don’t worry. This is for the nations of the world. But you can eat, drink and rejoice, as is stated (Tehillim 32:10): ‘There are many maladies for the wicked but those who trust in Hashem are surrounded by kindness.’”

In this vein, the *pasuk* states: (Shemos 21:1): “And these are the laws that I place before you.” Targum Onkelos translates this *pasuk* as: “*V’eilin dina di tesader kadmeihun.*” Rav Hersh of Rimanov *zy”a* understands this to mean that if a “*din*” (harsh decree) is issued in Heaven against Klal Yisroel, we ask that it should go “before us” and be transferred to the gentiles, so that it is not applied to the Jewish people.

## **The Inner Heart of a Jew is Pure:**

The Sifra writes that the *nega* is on the “skin of the flesh” but not in the actual flesh. The Yismach Yisroel explains that **the inner essence of a Jew always remains pure and clean, as every Jew possesses an inner spark that cannot be tarnished.** This is as Rav Boruch of Mezhibozh *zy”a* explains the *pasuk* in Tehillim (37:10) that states: “A short while longer and the wicked man is not here.” He explains that every Jew, even the biggest *rasha*, possesses a holy spark. In this place “the wicked man is not there.”

## **Mockery Leads to Heresy:**

The Yismach Yisroel notes that the Rambam (end of Hilchos Tumas Tzoraas) does say that the cause of *tzoraas* is *leitzanus*.

He writes that **when scoffers and wicked people sit together, they start their conversation with frivolous, empty words and go on to degrade *tzadikim*, ultimately coming to say blasphemous things about Hashem and to deny the fundamentals of Yiddishkeit**, and this is the cause of *tzoraas*. However, since every Jew possesses a pure inner spark where wickedness cannot enter, everyone has the ability to extricate himself from such gatherings and to not speak to such people. He says that **one should make a reckoning for himself that connecting to Hashem is much more important than anything else and, in order to remain**

**upright, he should have no connection to such people from now on.**

Regarding the Rambam's words, the students of the Baal Shem Tov *zy"ta* cite the verse in Tehillim (73:9): "They have set their mouth against Heaven, and their tongue walks through the earth." They explain that speaking against *tzadikim* in this world is, in actuality, *apikorsus* against Hashem Himself. Those who do this really want to speak against Him but they are ashamed to do so, so they direct their venom towards *tzadikim* instead. They really set their mouths against Heaven but they speak against *tzadikim*, with their true intent being to blaspheme.

וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר הַבָּשָׂר וְגו' וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְטָמְא אֹתוֹ (יג, ג)

And the kohen shall look at the nega on the skin...And the kohen sees it and he shall pronounce him to be tamei. (13:3)

**Sins Cannot be Hidden  
From a Tzadik:**

Rav Yerachmiel Moshe of Kozhnitz *zy"ta* related that Rav

Osher Hagadol of Slonim *zy"á* was once speaking about the *chasidim* of his generations and he said about them: **“Farmers are made of clay, Cossacks are made of straw, when they come to the Rebbe, they show the best in them, and they hide the bad. But I went to my holy Rebbe, Rav Shlomo of Karlin *zy"á* (and he kissed his fingers when he mentioned the name of his Rebbe), I hid my good parts from him. What is he? A G-d? Can he give out reward and punishment? But I showed him the bad because one must show a kohen his *nega*.”**

In this vein, Rav Moshe Midner *zt"l* related that Rav Chaika of Hamdora *zy"á* had a *chasid* named Shebsel. Whenever Shebsel would come to the Rebbe, he would first immerse in a mikvah and ask Hashem not to allow the Rebbe to know how he acted. Hashem

accepted his prayers and his Rebbe thought that he was a *tzadik* and referred to him as “Reb Shebsel”, in an honorable way.

One day, he bumped into the Rebbe before he had a chance to go to the mikvah and Rav Chaika saw who he really was. He raised his voice and said, “Shebs’ke (without the honorary title of ‘Reb’). **You can’t fool Hashem. You aren’t permitted to fool people. If one wants to fool others, the only one he is fooling is himself!”**

It is also related that the Stoliner Rebbe *zy"á* would regularly travel to Rav Boruch of Mezhibozh *zy"á*. He once traveled with his student, Rav Shalom of Horodok *zt"l* and when the Stoliner Rebbe came out of the Rav Boruch’s room, he asked those standing around, “Where is R’ Shalom?”

Those standing there were puzzled by his question. R' Shalom was standing right next to him but it seemed that he couldn't see him. The Stoliner Rebbe explained, "When I come to the Rebbe and I show him my faults, my eyes are blackened and I can't see anything."

### **Negaim Come Because of Lashon Hara:**

The Gemara (Eruchin 15B) states: "Rav Yosi ben Zimra said: If one speaks *lashon hara*, he is struck with *negaim*, as is stated (Tehilim 101:5): 'He who slanders his neighbor in secret, I cut him down.'" It states further (ibid 16A) that Rav Shmuel bar Nachmeni said that *negaim* come because of seven things, with one of them being the sin of *lashon hara*.

### **Rechilus Will Ultimately be Heard by the One Who Was Spoken About:**

The Chofetz Chaim *zt"l* once said to a group of people: One can learn how terrible speaking *rechilus* is from the process of sending a letter by mail. If one wants to send his friend a letter, he has to write his friend's full name and address, and attach a stamp. If he makes a mistake in the name or address, or forgets to put on a stamp, the letter will probably not be delivered. Even if everything is done correctly, one still cannot be guaranteed that his letter will be delivered because many letters are lost in the mail, even though the post office employs many people to sort the mail and to try to deliver every letter.

The opposite is true in regards to *rechilus*. When a person speaks badly about his friend, even if he doesn't mention his

name and only hints to whom he is talking about, and even if he doesn't say where his friend lives, and even if he doesn't pay anyone to tell his friend what he said about him, and even though no one is employed to make sure that the words are "delivered", **one can still be assured that the words he said will end up reaching the ears of the man who was spoken about because that is the power of *rechilus*.**

### The Power of Caring for Others:

We learn from this Parshah the severity of speaking badly about one's friend. This is so damaging that it causes one to be struck physically and financially. We can infer that the opposite is even more true – if one is careful to maintain his friend's honor, he will be greatly rewarded.

It is related that Rav Shimon

Sofer *zt"l*, the son of the Chasam Sofer *zy"o* and Rov of Krakow, married off one of his sons to the daughter of resident of Krakow who was both scholarly and wealthy. The *mechutin* was a young man who was marrying off his oldest daughter, and the wedding was regal and splendid. Sitting in front were all the local Rabbanim and *talmidei chochomim*, as well as many Rabbanim and Admorim who came from the surrounding area to take part in the simcha.

During the *seudah*, one of the Rabbanim who was seated next to the young *mechutin*, turned to him and asked, "Tell me, what *zechus* do you possess that made you worthy of doing a *shidduch* with such a great *gaon* and *tzadik* and a son of the Chasam Sofer?"

The *mechutin* replied, "I am merely a simple person. But I once did a good thing and I believe that the merit of this

action has always stood by me. I married the daughter of a poor man and, as is customary, my in-laws promised to give me certain presents and furnishings for our home. They fulfilled the word and gave us everything they promised. However, when we went to spend our first Shabbos as a married couple in my wife's parents' house, I noticed that my mother-in-law was not lighting the Shabbos lights in silver or glass candlesticks. Rather, she only had simple clay candleholders, while my wife had nice silver candlesticks that her parents had gifted to us.

“I asked my wife about this and she tearfully answered that her mother had given us her own candlesticks because she couldn't afford to purchase new ones for us. I started looking around the house and realized that my in-laws had given us other things of their own as well.

For example, the blankets they had given us were used but were of good quality, while the ones I saw in my in-law's house were very old and threadbare. I concluded that we had to return everything.

“I told my father-in-law: ‘Why should I have nice things while you have nothing? Why do I deserve these things more than you?’ I gave him back all his presents and I borrowed money from a friend to purchase what we needed for our house, trusting in Hashem to provide me with the money to pay back the loan.

“And Hashem did help! That very day, when I came to shul, a man approached me and told me that he had a good business deal for me. He advised me that it was worth my while to borrow money to invest in this deal, as it would make me a nice profit. I took his advice and borrowed some more money to buy the

merchandise he suggested and I made a lot of money from that deal. From then on, I was successful in everything I did. Hashem blessed me with wealth

and I had enough time to spend much of my day learning Torah. And now, I have merited becoming a *mechutin* with the Rov of the city.”

## Parshas Metzorah

זאת תהיה תורת המצורע וגו' טָהַרְתוּ וְהוּבֵא אֶל הַכֹּהֵן (יד, ב)

This shall be the law of the metzorah on... his purifying. And he shall be brought to the kohen. (14:2)

### Tzadikim Help Overcome the Yeitzer Hara:

The Bais Avrohom of Slonim zy”a (quoted in Sefer Sichos Kodesh) related that every morning, Rav Itzele of Koidenov zy”a would say to himself, “It is really hard to be a Jew. The *yeitzer hara* is a *malach*. It doesn’t have the challenges of eating, drinking and sleeping. But I am trapped in a flesh-and-blood body that constantly requires physical things. The *yeitzer hara* is made of fire while I am made of bones and meat. How can I beat him?

However, if I do my part, I can overcome him, as Chazal say (Shabbos 104A): ‘*Haba letaheer mesayin oso.*’ If a person begins to purify himself, he will receive Divine assistance. **Hashem will help and the *tzadikim* in this world and in the next will help.**”

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying, “This is the Torah of a *metzora*.” This refers to a person who views himself like a *metzora*, full of blemishes and wounds from head to toe, and he wants to fix and purify himself but doesn’t know how to

overcome his *yeitzer hara*. Regarding this, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh says: “I have met *reshaim* who told me outright that if they would know that they could do *teshuva* and then immediately die, they would do it. But they know that if they stay alive, they won’t be able to sustain the *teshuva* for too long. They are willing to die with *teshuva*, but they can’t live with *teshuva*.”

The Torah comes to encourage such people by saying “this is the Torah of a *metzora* on the day of his purification.” On the very day that one puts his heart to purifying himself and makes a small effort of his own even though he sees no way to fully defeat the *yeitzer hara*, Hashem will **implant him with full *emunah* that he will eventually reach the point of “being brought to the kohen”, meaning that he will become**

**connected to *tzadikim* who will help him become pure.**

### **One Who Speaks Lashon Hara Derives Hashem of Pleasure:**

The Meor Einayim *zy”a* explains why the punishment for *lashon hara* is *tzoraas* by quoting Chazal’s statement that the world was created by Hashem “for the Torah and for Yisroel). **The Jewish people are so important to Hashem that He created all the higher and lower worlds for our sake. Furthermore, He derives great pleasure from every Jewish person, including those who are wicked**, as is stated (Shir Hashirim 6:7): “*K’pelach harimon yarkesecha*”, which Chazal (Chagigah 27A) understand to mean that even “the empty ones” (*reikanim*) in Klal Yisroel are as full of mitzvos

as a pomegranate is full of seeds.

With this in mind, it can be said **that if someone speaks negatively about a Jew, even if he is saying the truth, he is taking pleasure away from Hashem and, so to speak, causing Him to be sad.** He is transforming Hashem's "*oneg*" into "*nega*" and, therefore, is deserving of being struck with a *nega*.

### Thinking Before Speaking:

The Medrash states (Koheles Rabbah 5:3): "A word worth a *selah*. Silence is worth two."

The Chozeh of Lublin *zy" a* explains that Chazal are teaching us an important lesson. Before a person opens his mouth to speak, he should filter his words like one filters fine flour ("*soles*"). Furthermore, it is not sufficient

to filter one's words once, rather they should be sifted twice, meaning that one should think twice before speaking in order to determine whether the words he wants to say should be spoken aloud. Thus, the Medrash is saying **that one's words are worth a *selah*, meaning that they are valuable, only if they are sifted twice, meaning that one thinks about them twice before speaking.**"

### Guarding One's Words is as Valuable as Self-Affliction:

The Vilna Gaon *zt" l* writes in his *tzavaah*: "The main way that one earns *Olam Haba* is by guarding one's mouth. This is greater than all Torah and good deeds **because the mouth is *kodesh kodashim*.** Until the day of one's death, he must afflict himself, but not by fasting or

harming his body. Rather, one does this by holding back his mouth and his desires...

**Guarding one's mouth in this way is more effective than all fasts and physical afflictions. Every single second that a person closes his mouth, he is rewarded with a great, hidden light that no angel or creation can imagine."**

In truth, this is something every individual can understand for himself, as it is clearly harder to engage in a "*taanis dibbur*" and refrain from talking for a whole day than to fast and refrain from eating for a day.

### **A Taanis Dibbur That Led to Wasted Words:**

The Kotzker Rebbe *zy"ta* once met a *chasid* who was in the middle of a *taanis dibbur*. However, he could see with his *ruach hakodesh* that after his

*taanis dibbur* was done, this *chasid* was going to speak many frivolous and unnecessary words, which would far outweigh that day's silence. Therefore, he told him to end his *taanis dibbur* and, instead, to be careful with the words he does say. He told him, "It's better to speak a little every day than to be silent one day and speak a lot the next day."

Those close to the Rebbe later asked him, "Isn't making a *taanis dibbur* a very good thing? Why did you tell him to stop?"

The Rebbe answered, "**I'm not afraid of his fasting. But I am afraid of his 'oisfasten'** (what he will do when his fast ends)."

### **Do Not Swallow Your Friend:**

Rav Yisroel Salanter *zt"l* explains the connection between

Parshas Shemini, which deals with permitted and forbidden foods. and Parshas Tazria and Metzora by saying that many people are careful about what they put into their mouths but are not as careful about what comes out of their mouths. They make sure not to eat anything forbidden but sometimes say words that are forbidden to say.

The Torah is teaching us that one must be just as careful with lashon hara – the sin that causes *tzora'as* – as he is with the laws of kashrus. Just like one is careful not to swallow anything forbidden, he must be careful not to “swallow” his friend by speaking badly about him.

Regarding this, Rav Dovid of Lelov zy”a offers an explanation of the verse (Tehillim 22:7): “I am a worm and not a man.” He explains this to mean that when one thinks about others, he should consider himself to be

like a worm, rather than like a man, so that there is no chance that he will swallow them with his words.

It is related that the Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa zy”a once told his student, Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a, to travel to a certain city, without revealing the reason for the trip. Rav Bunim asked no questions. He took several other members of the “*chavraya*”, hired a wagon driver, and went on his way.

After several hours of travel, the group got hungry. They stopped at the closest city and entered a roadside inn, intending to buy a meal. Rav Bunim went into a side room while the other *chasidim* went to speak to the owner about preparing a meal for them. They asked if he could make them a dairy meal but he told them that he had no dairy products on hand and he could only make them a fleishig meal.

The *chasidim* didn't want to eat in a place where they didn't know the Rov or shochet. They began asking about the *shochet* and how he checked the animal and salted the meat, etc.

Suddenly, they heard a voice saying, "*Chasidim, chasidim...*"

They looked around until they saw a Jewish man dressed in torn clothing sitting behind the furnace. This man said to them sharply, "*Chasidim... you are so careful about what you put into your mouths. You have so many shailohs about who the shochet is, how the meat was prepared... But you have no shailohs at all about what comes your mouths...*"

Rav Bunim heard what the man said and it made a big impression on him. We are so careful about what we put into our mouths but so lackadaisical about what comes out of our

mouths, even though forbidden words may be a more severe prohibition than forbidden foods. He now understood why his *rebbe* had sent him to this place. He wanted him to hear these words and learn this important lesson for life. He immediately told the wagon driver to prepare for the return trip, as they had already concluded the reason for their journey.

### Three Stories About Judging Everyone Favorably:

The way to avoid speaking badly about others is by seeing the good in them and judging them favorably.

During the times of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov *zy"ta*, there lived a very wealthy man who was known to be very stingy. He was such a miser that

on the day he died, the Chevra Kadisha refused to bury him until his family paid the sum of 1,000 gold coins for his burial plot, which was many times more than the amount they usually charged. The man's sons came to Rav Levi Yitzchok and asked him to preside over their *din Torah* with the Chevra Kadisha, and he agreed,

When they told him that their father had died, Rav Levi Yitzchok began to cry and proclaim, "Oy vey! We have lost a great man! We must make a proclamation that everyone in town must stop working to participate in the funeral, and I will deliver a *hesped*."

And so it was. Everyone close their stores and came to the *levaya*.

Rav Levi Yitzchok began his eulogy by saying, "We now know that this man secretly

distributed a lot of money to *tzedakah*. This is evident from three *dinei Torah* that were brought before me..."

He continued, "The first story was that a certain man borrowed a lot of money from several people. He went to the marketplace to buy merchandise to sell for a profit. The market was very crowded and there was a lot of jostling and pushing. When he reached into his pocket for his wallet, he was shocked to see that it was gone.

"The man began to scream and cry, until he fainted. This wealthy man heard the screams and hurried over to the man. Although he had not found the money, he whispered into the man's ear, 'I found some money. Tell me, how much did you lose.'

"The man opened his eyes and told him how much he had lost,

and the wealthy man immediately gave that much to him. The man was overjoyed to have his money back and he went on his way. Meanwhile, the man who really found the money had seen what the wealthy man did. He walked over to him and tried to give him the money he found but the wealthy man refused to take it, saying that he had earned the mitzvah of helping a fellow Jew and he would not agree to give it up. In the end, they came to me for a *din Torah*. I heard their claims and ruled that the money should be given to *tzedakah*.

“The second story was that a certain man was unsuccessful in business. He decided to travel to a distant city with the hope of finding *parnassah* there. His wife tried to stop him from going, saying that he couldn't leave her and the children without any source of livelihood for such an extended period of

time. The man comforted her by saying, ‘Don't worry. I made an arrangement with a wealthy man to give you 25 rubles every month, and I'll pay him back when I return home.’

“He gave her the name of the *nifter* and told her that he had agreed to the deal. In truth, he had never spoken to the wealthy man and no deal had been made and he was only telling this to his wife so that she would allow him to go.

“After her husband left on his journey, the wife went to the wealthy man's house and asked for her money. The wealthy man realized what was going on, and pretended that the husband really had arranged a deal with him. He gave her the money, and continued to do every week for 10 years.

“When the husband finally came home with all the money

he made, he was expecting to find his wife living in poverty. He was surprised to see that she was living very nicely and he asked her how she had managed. She said, 'I did what you told me to do. I went to the wealthy man and he gave me money every week.'

"The husband made a calculation of how much he owed the wealthy man for all his year's of supporting his family, and he went to repay the money. However, the wealthy man refused to accept the money, saying that he had earned the mitzvah and he wouldn't give it up. Again, they came to me for a *din Torah* and I ruled that the money should be given to *tzedakah*.

"The third story was that a businessman lost all his money in a bad deal, and he fell deeply into debt. He heard about a forest that was up for sale for 1,000

rubles, and he knew that he could double his money and get back on his feet if he could purchase it. He approached the *nifter* and asked him to please lend him the money to make the purchase. The wealthy man asked him, 'Who will cosign for you on the loan?'

"The man replied, 'Hashem will be my cosigner.'

"The wealthy man liked this answer and said, 'Very good. Hashem is the best guarantor in the world.'

"He gave the man the loan, and he more than doubled the money from his investment. He paid back all his debts and then came to the wealthy man to pay back his loan but he refused to accept payment. He said, 'The day after I lent you the money, your cosigner paid back the loan. You don't owe me anything.'

"Once more, they came to me

for a din Torah and I ruled that the money should be given to *tzedakah*.”

Rav Levi Yitzchok concluded his *hesped* by saying, “I only know about these three stories but there are certainly many more stories like these that we don’t know about. Therefore, we should all cry over this huge loss!”

### **The Baal Teshuva Immediately Connects to Hashem:**

The Zohar Hakadosh (129A) states about the verse: “And Avrohom was old advanced in age” that Avrohom didn’t reach his closeness to Hashem in one day. Rather, with his good actions, he drew closer to Him little by little, getting a bit nearer each day, until he finally reached his loftiest level in his old age. This is seen from the *pasuk* that

says that when Avrohom was old, he was “advanced in days”, meaning that he used each day to get a little closer to Hashem. Sefer Divrei Shmuel writes that while this is the normal way to draw close to Hashem, *baalei teshuva* are able to jump to lofty levels in one day, or even in one moment, in a manner that even complete *tzadikim* cannot emulate.

This idea is hinted to in the verse that says: “This is the Torah of the *metzora* on the day of his purification.” This can mean that as soon as he does teshuva, on that very day, he is purified and “he is brought to the kohen”, which is a reference to Hashem, who is referred to as a “kohen” (see Sanhedrin 39A).

וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל מַחֲוֵיץ לְמַחֲנֵה וַיִּרְאֶה וַיִּרְאֶה וְהָיָה נִרְפָּא נִגַע הַצָּרְעַת וְגו' (י"ד),  
(ג)

And the kohen will go out of the camp and the kohen shall look, and behold, the spot of tzoraas has healed... (14:3)

## Hashem's Look Provides Healing:

The Zohar Hakadosh (Tazria 49B) states that the “kohen” in this verse is Hashem. Sefer Mei Hashiloach explains that when

Hashem looks into the soul of a Jew, he is immediately healed from all that ails him spiritually. This is because a “look from Hashem” always benefits a person.

וַיִּצְוֶה הַכֹּהֵן וְלָקַח לְמַשְׁחֵהוּ וְגו' חַיִּוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת וְעֵץ אֶרֶז וּשְׁנֵי תוֹלְעוֹת וְאַזְבִּי (י"ד, ד)

And the kohen shall order, and the person to be purified shall take... pure birds, a cedar stick, a strip of crimson wool, and hyssop. (14:4)

## Atonement for Improper Modesty:

Rashi states: “How should he rectify himself to be healed? He should lower himself from his haughtiness like a worm (*tolaas*) and hyssop (grass).”

Rav Henoch of Alexander zy”a (Sefer Chashbah L’Tova) writes that the opposite is also true. If someone is lowly and downtrodden like grass, he

should raise himself up because people sometimes have to do *teshuva* for undue humility. An example of this would be if a poor man asks for help raising money for his needs, and he is told, “Who am I to help you? Why would anyone give money because I asked them to?” On the other hand, this same person would become very upset if he felt disrespected, and he would forget his claim of “who am I?”

Thus, it is clear that humility is fake and should be discarded.

This is in accordance with Rav Zushe of Anipoli zy"as explanation of the verse (Tehillim 10:3): "*Ki hillel rasha al taivos nafsho.*" (A wicked man boasts about his heart's desires.) He translates this *pasuk* to mean that a *rasha* boasts about being as modest as Hillel – the most humble of men – and justifies his sins by saying that he is a lowly man and cannot help himself. **It is obvious that Hashem doesn't want this form of false *anavah*, as He only desires genuine humility.**

It is related that one year on Erev Yom Kippur, the Ropshitzer Rebbe zy"asaw a very rich man tearfully reciting Vidui and declaring loudly, "I am dust in this lifetime and certainly after my death." The Rebbe was very impressed by the man's humility.

The next day, however, he was surprised to see that when the wealthy man given an Aliyah that he felt was not honorable enough for him, he began to yell at the Gabbai for not giving him a more desirable Aliyah. The Rebbe asked him, "What's going on? Yesterday, I heard you say that you consider yourself to be like dust. What are you so upset about?"

The man replied, "Yes. **In relation to Hashem, I am like dust. But in comparison to the Gabbai, I am not.**"

### True Humility:

The Sefas Emes asks: Why does the Torah only hint that a person must lower himself and be humble in order to be cured? Why doesn't it say so explicitly?

He answers that it is not possible to reach a genuine state

of humility unless a person really believes that he is lowly and unimportant and that he truly does not deserve anything and has no reason to be haughty. **If it is hard for a person to feel humble, it is a sign that he really does think of himself as valuable and important** and that his modesty is not genuine.

Therefore, the Torah cannot explicitly command someone to be humble, as one cannot force himself to do this if he doesn't really mean it. Someone who has to force himself to act humbly is not a true *anav*, so it would be impossible to command someone to do this. Instead, the Torah hints to the power of humility, as a lesson that one should feel that he is lowly and unimportant and, if one feels this way, he won't have to fool himself in order to be humble.

A humorous story is said about a bochur who excelled in Torah

and wisdom. When he reached marriageable age, he rejected every suggestion that was made to him, as he felt that they were all beneath his dignity. Finally, a wise man approached him and said, "Yes, it is true that you have many good qualities but there is one quality that you are missing. You are not a humble person. You still have to work on not being a *baal gaivoh*."

The bochur accepted his rebuke and said that he would work on not being haughty. A short while later, the wise man suggested a *shidduch* for the boy. He thought that now that the bochur had committed to try to be humble, he would agree to the *shidduch*. To his surprise, he said, "I have added another good *middah* to my personality. I am now even bigger than before. Therefore, this *shidduch* is definitely not good enough for me."

## Shamed so as Not to Become Haughty:

Rav Zushe of Aniploi zy" *a* was extremely poor. When it came time to marry off his children, he had no money for wedding expenses. His Rebbe, the Magid of Mezheritzh zy" *a*, knew about his situation. When Rav Zushe came to spend time with him, the Magid handed him 300 rubles and told him to use it for his children's weddings.

On his way home, Rav Zushe spent the night in a certain small town. That evening, he heard loud cries coming from one of the houses. He asked what the screaming was about and was told that an orphaned girl was supposed to get married that night but on the way to the *chasuna*, the girl's widowed mother somehow lost the 300 rubles she was bringing with her to the groom as her daughter's dowry. The groom now was

refusing to marry her, and the mother was crying bitterly.

Rav Zushe went to the widow's house and told her that he had found her money. He asked her identifying signs to prove it was hers. She gave him some *simanim* and he said that he had indeed found her money. He quickly ran to change his money into the denominations the widow had described and went back to her house to give it to her. By then, a crowd had gathered to prepare for the wedding, which was now back on.

However, when Rav Zushe gave back the many, he kept ahold of one 20 ruble note and said, "I will keep this as reward for my troubles."

The widow was shocked and said that the entire sum belonged to her but Rav Zushe insisted that he deserved 20 rubles for his

trouble. Unsurprisingly, everyone began yelling at him and insulting him for being so selfish. They called him a thief and other nasty names but he firmly refused to give back the last 20 rubles. Finally, the men dragged him to the Rov of the city, who ruled that he must return the 20 rubles.

Even after the *p'sak* was issued, Rav Zushe refused to let go of the 20 rubles note until a few men started hitting him and they grabbed the money out of his hand. They then threw him out of the city with much disgrace.

Not long thereafter, the Rov met the Magid of Mezheritch and told him what his student had done, expressing his outrage that Rav Zushe had wanted to steal 20 rubles from a widow. The Magid sternly told him, "You must ask him forgiveness. That was his own money. I know

because I gave him that 300 rubles to marry of his children."

The Rov went to Anipoli and asked Rav Zushe for *mechilah* for embarrassing him. Rav Zushe told him, "I never had any bad feelings towards you so I certainly wholeheartedly forgive you. All I ask is that you don't tell the widow that the money I gave her was not hers."

The next time Rav Zushe went to the Magid, he asked him to explain his conduct. Rav Zushe said, "I saw that I was receiving *kavod* for my mitzvah and thought that this might lead me to have haughty thoughts. Therefore, I did all I could to be shamed so that I would not come to *gaivoh*."

## Negaim Display Klal Yisroel's Greatness:

The Alshich Haksdosh

(Parshas Tazria) writes that the reason *negaim* only affect Jews and not non-Jews is because gentiles are inherently impure and, therefore, the impure actions and sins they do have no visible effect on them. Jews, however, are natural pure. Therefore, when they do impure actions, it was a noticeable effect.

He adds that this also explains why *negaim* only happened in

olden times and are not seen today. **The effects of impurity can only be seen when Jews are pure and untainted.** In times when we are surrounded by impurity, the effects of impure actions cannot be seen.

We see from his words that the fact that we do not suffer from *tzoraas* today is not a positive thing. Rather, it is a sign that we are far from the level we should be on.

וְכִסּוּס הַמְּטוֹרָה אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְגו' וְטָהַר וְאַחַר יָבוֹא אֶל הַמַּחֲנֶה וְיֵשֵׁב מִחוּץ  
לְאֹהֱלוֹ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים (יד, ח)

And the man being purified shall wash his clothes...and after this, he may enter the camp, but he shall remain outside his tent for seven days. (14:8)

### A Haughty Man is Not Even Accepted by His Family:

Rav Shmelke of Nikolsberg *zy"u* explained that a *metzora* is obligated to remain outside his tent for seven days because, as Rashi says, *tzoraas* is a punishment for haughtiness.

Since this person was a *baal gaavah*, he cannot live with his family members as even they cannot stand to be near him. Therefore, he must remain out of the house until he fixes his ways.

כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל אֶרֶץ פְּנֵעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם לְאֶחְזָהּ וְגו' בְּבֵית אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזַּתְכֶם  
(יד לד)

When you come to the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as a possession...  
upon a house in the land of your possession. (14:34)

## Negaim Prove That Everything is From Hashem:

The Chida *zt"l* (Sefer Chomas Anach) asks why it is necessary to mention that the *nega* is in “the land of your *nachalah*”. Why can’t it simply say that it is in a house? Additionally, why is it mentioned that the house is in “Eretz Canaan”?

He answers that the main cause of *negaim* is stinginess. If a person uses his house only for himself and not as a means to host others and provide for them, which is the main reason Hashem gave him a house in the first place.

He thus explains that the word “Canaan” symbolizes “*hachnaah*” (self-annulment).

The *pasuk* is saying that one should be humble and realize that Hashem gave him his house in Eretz Yisroel as part of the “*nachalah*” that He bestowed upon us. Therefore, one should not be stingy and refuse to share his house with others, as it is not truly his. Rather, it is Hashem land that He allows you to live.

If one fails to recognize this and thinks his house is his alone, he will be struck with a *nega*.

## The Poor Man’s Hishtadlus:

The Gemara at the beginning of Maseches Shabbos says “*ha’ani chayav*”, the poor man is liable. (The Gemara is speaking about the prohibition to carry on Shabbos from a

public domain to a private domain. It refers to a man standing outside, in a public area, as an “*ani*”, and says that if he carries from a private domain to the public domain that he is in, he is liable to be punished.)

A *badchan* once lightheartedly said to the Magid of Zlotchov *zy”a*, “The *ani* works so hard but he barely has enough to feed his family on Shabbos, while a rich man can feed his family easily. Yet, when he comes to shul to learn Maseches Shabbos, he sees that the Gemara says that he is *chayav*. Why should he this poor man be *chayav*?”

The Magid replied that he would give an answer to this question on Shabbos. At his *tish* that week, the Magid said that he had asked this question to the Mesivta D’Rakia, and they answered that the reason the *ani* is *chayav* is because he stretched out his hand and did *hishtadlus*.

## Trusting in Hashem to Not Abandon Us:

Regarding one’s obligation to trust in Hashem to help him, it is related that a fire once broke out in the city of Beshinkowitz. The house of Rav Shmuel Minkus *zt”l*, one of the leading Mashpi’im of Lubavitch, was one of those that burned to the ground. His family was unharmed but his house was completely destroyed.

The next day, Rav Shmuel went to the site the fire and gazed at the wreckage. He then raised his voice and declared, “*Boruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha’olam...*”

Everyone thought he was making the *bracha* of “*dayan ha’emes*” but, instead, he concluded with the words: “*shelo asani goy.*”

Rav Shmuel saw that everyone was puzzled by what he had

done so he explained, “Imagine if I would be a *goy*, *chas v’shalom*. If that were the case, my idols would also have burned in the fire. But since I am a Yid, my G-d, Hashem Yisborach, lives eternally and I know that He will never abandon me.”

זאת התורה לכל נגע הצרעת וגו' ולספחת ולבהרת (יד נד)

This is the law for every negah of tzoraas... For a safachas and for a baheres... (14:54)

### Torah Heals Negaim:

The Gemara says (Eruvin 54A): “If one’s head hurts, he should immerse himself in Torah.” The *pasuk* (Mishlei 4:22) also says that Torah heals all flesh.

Sefer Degel Machaneh Efraim explains that the cause of all sickness is a lack of respect for Torah. If one immerses himself in Torah study, the Torah will atone for his sin and heal him. In this way, he explains the *pasuk*

(Vayikroh 7:37): “This is the Torah of Olah, Minchah and Chatas” – this Torah atones for all the things that the korbanos of Olah, Minchah and Chatas atone for.

This is also the meaning of this verse. **This Torah takes cares of every *negah*. It heals every affliction of the skin. Torah atones for a person’s sins, and, therefore, heals him from all health problems and sicknesses.**

להורות ביום הטמא וביום הטהר וגו' (יד, נז)

To render decisions regarding the day of tamei and the day tahor... (14:57)

## **One Who Knows He Has Sinned Can Immediately Learn:**

Sefer Divrei Shmuel explains that the word “*l’horos*” can mean “to learn”. Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that both the person who is *tamei* and the person who is *tahor* can learn Torah.

The *pasuk* in Tehillim (50:16) does say that Hashem says to a

*rasha*, “Why do you speak about My laws?” This indicates that He does not want wicked men to learn Torah. However, if one knows that he is *tamei* and he wants to become *tahor*, he is given permission to learn.

He adds that since the impure man is allowed to learn, he should learn with joy, knowing that he soon will become *tahor* and he will be able to learn in purity once more.

## **10 Iyar – The Yahrzeit of Rav Dovid ben Rav Mordechai of Tolna Zy”a – Author of Sefer Magen Dovid**

### **Trust in Hashem, Not in Money:**

There once was a merchant who traveled to a certain city for business and stayed overnight in an inn. He asked the innkeeper for a private room and was given one.

Later that night, he heard a loud commotion as a large crowd

made its way towards the inn. The innkeeper knocked on the door of his room and informed him that Rav Dovid of Tolna zy”a had come to the inn with his *chasidim*. He asked if he would agree to give up the private room so the Rebbe could stay there and move into a shared room with another man, as this was the only private room in the

inn.

The merchant readily agreed. He was very happy to even have the opportunity to spend time in the presence of a great Rebbe and to observe his holy ways.

As word spread that the Tolna Rebbe was staying in the inn, a large crowd gathered to receive his blessing. The merchant was not a *chasid* and had never seen anything like this. He watched in amazement as the large crowd stood in awe, waiting for their chance to see the great *tzadik*.

A short time later, the merchant heard the innkeeper and his wife arguing with each other. From their words, he understood that the Rebbe had asked them to give him 200 rubles, which was a huge amount of money in those times. The innkeeper and his wife could not agree on whether or not they should give over the money, which equaled all the

funds they had to their name. The innkeeper was saying that he trusted the Rebbe and if he asked for this amount in exchange for his blessing, they definitely should give it. After much discussion, they decided to give the money to the Rebbe.

The merchant became very angry. He couldn't understand how the Rebbe could be so cruel as to ask for such a large sum or why the innkeeper and his wife would agree.

It was very late at night when the couple exited the Rebbe's room. The merchant then saw the Rebbe and his Gabbai go outside and he watched as they strolled around the courtyard. The Rebbe turned to the Gabbai and said, "I think here, in this place, it would be appropriate to have a two-story house with many rooms, and here I think it would be a good place to build stables for horses..."

The Rebbe continued walking around the courtyard, showing the Gabbai what could be built and where. He then asked for the horses to be saddled and he left town.

The merchant had never been a *chasid* but he now became a big *misnaged* against the *chasidim* and their Rebbes.

Years later, this merchant returned to the same town and went to stay in the same inn. However, he couldn't find it. He went to what he thought was the same place but he didn't recognize it. In the place of what had been a simple inn stood a beautiful structure.

He then remembered everything the Rebbe had said during that late-night walk, and realized that everything had been built exactly as he had suggested. He couldn't believe that everything had come true

exactly as the Rebbe predicted.

He asked around and was told that since the Tolna Rebbe's visit, the innkeeper had become very wealthy and he had built this grand edifice. However, the merchant still couldn't understand one thing. If the Rebbe was such a *baal mofes*, why did he need to ask the innkeeper for 200 rubles?

He was bothered by this question that he decided to travel to Tolna to ask the Rebbe himself.

When he asked his question, the Rebbe told him, "This man had 200 rubles in savings. Whenever he began to worry about what might happen if the landowner wanted to evict them, he would be comforted by the fact that he had 200 rubles put away and he could use that to take care of the problem.

"He also had a small side

investment, and whenever he worried about what would happen if this investment failed, he would remember his 200 rubles and he would stop worrying about the future.

“This meant that the 200 rubles became their *avodah zara*. They placed their trust in it, rather than in Hashem. I wanted to help them get rid of this *avodah zara* so that they would have *bitachon* solely in Hashem, and I could only bless them with wealth if I could accomplish this.”

**May the memory of the tzadik be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.**

The Rambam Writes About Those Who  
Bring Joy to Widdows and Orphans

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Joy to These Unfortunate  
Souls Is Comparable to  
the Holy Shechinah!”**

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