



Parshas Tazria 2024, Speech and Destiny

**The Parsha Perspective is in honor of Eretz Yisroel. May G-d protect our brave soldiers.
May G-d return all the hostages in Gaza immediately.**

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, and in loving memory of Hinda Bas Udl, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha discusses many of the complex laws of Tumah V'taharah, ritual purity, and impurity. We begin with the purification process that a woman must undergo after childbirth. This involves her immersion in a Mikvah and bringing a sacrifice in the Beis Hamikdash.

The Parsha then explains the intricate laws of Tzara'as, a skin discoloration. Since Tzara'as is understood as a physical manifestation of spiritual transgression, it renders the person who receives it ritually impure. A Kohen must inspect a person who thinks they have the symptoms of Tzara'as. He examines it, and judging by the various signs (such as an increase in size after seven days), the Kohen will pronounce it pure or impure.

A person diagnosed with Tzara'as must dwell alone outside of the city limits until it is healed. Once the prescribed time has passed, they must undergo a rigorous purification process to return to their city and community.

However, a question comes to mind: When our Parsha introduces the laws of Tzara'as, it uses a rather distinctive word, אָדָם. The Pasuk writes: (13:1) אָדָם כִּי־יִהְיֶה אָדָם כְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאָת אוֹ־סִפְחָת אוֹ בְּהֶרֶת – *"When a person has on the skin of their body a swelling, a rash, or a discoloration."* Why does our Parsha utilize an uncommon word to

introduce the laws of Tzara'as, as opposed to אִי - man or mankind, as it generally does?

The Chizkuni, Rav Chezekiah ben Manoah, gives a simple answer. He writes that the Torah uses the word אָדָם to include everyone in the laws of Tzara'as, meaning that men, women, and children are susceptible and vulnerable to Tzara'as and its repercussions. If they speak badly about a fellow Jew, they will likely receive Tzara'as in one form or another.

The Chizkuni elaborates that although an individual might develop a rash or similar condition, this alone does not render them impure according to the Kohen's diagnosis. However, it serves as a wake-up call to the significance and impact of their words and how they may dangerously harm or damage others. By choosing אָדָם over other possible terms, the Torah encapsulates every individual within the community, emphasizing the collective responsibility towards speech and conduct.

However, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, a descendant of the great Brisker Rabbinic dynasty, known simply as the Rav, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He connects the word אָדָם to the last time the Torah used the word, at the beginning of Parshas Vayikra.

The Pasuk in Vayikra states: (1:2) אָדָם כִּי־יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קִרְבָּן לֵה' - *"When a person from amongst you offers a sacrifice to G-d."* While both Pesukim use the term אָדָם, the Rav notes a significant differentiation. The Pasuk in Vayikra adds מִכֶּם - "from amongst you," signifying a communal connection. While the word אָדָם in our Parsha is distinctively singular, indicating the repercussions and consequences of receiving Tzara'as.

The Rav writes that our words have immense spiritual influence and physical power. When offering a sacrifice, our confession is capable of securing forgiveness for our sins. Our words honor and praise G-d and share His Oneness with the world.

But the opposite is also true, our speech can also cause harm that is nearly impossible to repair. The damage they can trigger isn't predictable nor can it be contained or controlled. Once they leave our lips, they are eternal, taking on a life of its own.

Accordingly, the Rav explains that the **מַכָּה** in our Parsha must leave the **מַכָּה** - the community to reflect on the significance of their words and the impact of their actions. Only following this period of contemplation may they use words to offer a sacrifice and rejoin the **מַכָּה** - **the nation chosen by G-d to be his ambassadors on this earth.**

The profound lesson that the Rav derives from our Parsha is only magnified as the war against our enemies continues. Especially as we enter Nissan, the month of our redemption from Egypt, we must sing the song of faith and strength as victory is in our grasp and the ultimate redemption is near.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand the profound impact our words can have. Our speech can influence not only the actions of others but also shape our own destiny. Studies have highlighted the power of positive language, demonstrating that those who consistently speak with optimism tend to lead happier and more prosperous lives.

Given the war in Israel, the importance of maintaining a positive mindset becomes even clearer and necessary. As we find ourselves confronted with hate and negativity, choosing to use positive words is not just a coping mechanism; but a sign of our resilience and strength. A deliberate and intentional choice that is steering us towards the ultimate and final redemption.

"I will speak that I may find relief, for there is a redemptive quality for an agitated mind in the spoken word."

-An expert from the Rav's forward of his book, *The Lonely Man of Faith*.

Have a meaningful Shabbos!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini