

**“I will place a tzara’as affliction upon a house in your ancestral land”  
The Phenomenal Lesson Learned from House Afflictions -  
Treasures of Gold and Silver are Concealed  
within Every Human Being**

On the upcoming Shabbas kodesh, which approaches auspiciously, we read from the Torah the double-parsha Sazria-Metzora. They both discuss the laws of afflictions. Hence, it is fitting that we examine the common-thread shared by the two parshas by examining more closely two specific types of lesions—lesions afflicting human beings, discussed in parshas Sazria, and lesions afflicting houses, discussed in parshas Metzora.

Let us begin our journey with the revealing text in parshas Sazria, concerning human afflictions (Vayikra 12, 2): **“אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת או ספחת או בהרת והיה בעור בשרו לנגע צרעת והובא אל אהרן בעור בשרו שאת או ספחת או בהרת והיה בעור בשרו לנגע צרעת והובא אל אהרן—הכהן או אל אחד מבניו הכהנים—if a person will have on the skin of his flesh a “s’eit,” or a “sapachat,” or a “baheres,” and it will become a tzara’as affliction on the skin of his flesh; he shall be brought to Aharon hakohen, or to one of his sons the kohanim.** By contrast, the text in parshas Metzora reveals for us the details of house afflictions (ibid. 14, 34): **“כי תבואו אל ארץ כנען—אשר אני נותן לכם לאחוזתה, ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחוזתכם—and I will place a tzara’as affliction upon a house in your ancestral land. . .”**

We learn from Rashi’s commentary that a monumental difference exists between these two categories of lesions. According to Rashi, human afflictions represent a form of punishment. The passuk states (14, 4): **“וצוה הכהן ולקח למטהר—שתי צפרים חיות טהורות ועץ ארז ושני תולעת ואזוב—the kohen shall command; and for the person being purified there shall be taken two live, pure birds, cedar wood, and a crimson tongue of wool, and hyssop.** Rashi comments: **“two, live, pure birds, since afflictions come about because of “lashon hara,” which is an act of verbal twittering; therefore, his purification required birds that twitter incessantly with a chirping sound;**

**cedar wood, because afflictions come because of haughtiness; crimson wool and hyssop—what is his remedy? He should lower himself from his arrogance—like a worm and like a hyssop.”**

In distinct contrast, concerning house afflictions, Rashi comments—based on a Midrash in the name of the divine Tanna, Rashb”y—that they represent a form of reward; they come to reveal treasures of gold that are hidden behind the walls of the house. Rashi writes (ibid. 14, 34): **“lesions afflicting them are good news, because the Emorim hid treasures of gold in the walls of their houses all forty years that Yisrael were in the desert; and as a result of the affliction, he breaks down the house and finds them.”**

The Sifsei Chachamim explains that Rashi deduced this distinction based on the linguistic nuances of the pesukim. Regarding lesions afflicting houses, the passuk states: **“and I will place a tzara’as affliction.”** It does not state: **“if a tzara’as lesion appears”**—paralleling the language used regarding lesions afflicting human beings. This implies that HKB”H is promising Yisrael good tidings; when Yisrael arrive in Eretz Canaan, He will place tzara’as lesions in the houses. This teaches us that they are a positive omen revealing the presence of fortunes within the walls of the house.

**House Afflictions: Expound the Passage  
and Be Rewarded**

In this essay, we wish to examine the statement in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 71a): **“בית המנוגע לא היה ולא עתיד להיות, ולמה נכתב דרוש—there never was a tzara’as -afflicted house, nor will there ever be one in the future; so why was this law written in the Torah? G-d is telling us to expound the passage and be**

**rewarded.** The Gemara concludes that based on the elucidation of the pesukim, a house only becomes “tamei” if lesions appear with precise dimensions and in precise locations on the walls of the house—specifications which are unlikely. This indicates that the entire matter of house afflictions is solely for the purpose of: “דרוש וקבל שכר”—**expound the passage and be rewarded.** Hence, it is incumbent upon us to fulfill this mitzvah by expounding this passage and attempting to comprehend the lesson inherent in the subject of house afflictions.

If the subject of house afflictions itself requires clarification, Rashi’s comment requires even greater clarification. He commented, based on the words of Rashb”y, that a tzara’as lesion placed on the house by HKB”H portends good tidings—prompting the owners of these houses to tear their houses down in order to reveal the golden treasures hidden within the walls. Yet, since house afflictions never were and never will be, what then is the message concealed in the walls of the afflicted house?

Additionally, we must address an apparent contradiction to Rashi’s comment from what we have learned in the Gemara (Arachin 16a); there it states that house afflictions constitute a punishment for theft and stinginess. This conclusion is derived from the passuk (Vayikra 14, 36): **“וצוה הכהן ופינו את הבית - תנא הוא כונס ממון שאינו שלו, יבוא הכהן ויפזר ממנו [שיראו כולם שהוא גנב], ועל צרות העין, דכתיב (שם-לה) ובא אשר לו הבית, ותנא דבי רבי ישמעאל מי שמיוחדד “ביתו לו”—the kohen shall command and they shall clear the house”; a Baraita taught regarding this passuk: he gathered in money that did not belong to him; let the kohen come and scatter his property (illustrating to everyone that he is a thief); for stinginess, as it is written, “and the owner of the house shall come”; and a Baraita was taught in the academy of Rabbi Yishmael: G-d visits tzara’as on the house of someone who keeps his house to himself, i.e. he is stingy and does not wish to benefit others. Thus, we must endeavor to explain how this coincides with Rashb”y’s elucidation that these lesions constitute a good omen.**

## Two Live Pure Birds for Human Afflictions and House Afflictions

I was struck by a wonderful idea. In keeping with the directive issued by the Talmudic sages—**“expound and be rewarded”**—I would like to propose a solution to all of these questions. Note that the exact same korban is brought for atonement and purification both for human afflictions and house afflictions. Just as for human lesions, one must bring: **“two live, pure birds, and cedar wood, and a crimson tongue of wool, and hyssop”**; similarly, for house

lesions, the Torah prescribes the exact same korban for atonement and purification (ibid. 49): **“to cleanse the house, he shall take two birds, cedar wood, a crimson tongue of wool, and hyssop. He shall slaughter the one bird into an earthenware vessel over fresh water. . . and he shall sprinkle upon the house seven times . . . he shall set the live bird free toward the outside of the city upon the open field; thus he shall provide atonement for the house, and it shall become purified.**

At first glance, this is somewhat startling. For, according to Rashi’s comment, based on the teaching of Rashb”y, the entire matter of house afflictions represents good tidings—revealing the locations of hidden treasures of gold. If so, why is the owner of the house required to bring a korban for atonement and purification on account of this affliction? According to Rashi, the two birds, cedar wood, hyssop and crimson tongue of wool are meant to atone for the utterances of lashon hara and for the fact that this person behaved arrogantly, like a cedar tree.

I would like to propose a solution based on a difficulty the commentaries have with Rashi’s explanation: **“since afflictions come about because of “lashon hara,” which is an act of verbal twittering; therefore, his purification required birds that twitter incessantly with a chirping sound.”** Even so, why does the Torah command the person to bring two birds; one bird alone would have sufficed to teach the intended lesson not to speak lashon hara?

Furthermore, we must inquire, why did the Torah command the person to slaughter only one bird and, yet, to send the live bird free toward the outskirts of the city, so that it would continue to chirp? We find a magnificent explanation in the teachings of the holy master, Rabbi Yehoshua of Belz, zy”a. The Zohar hakadosh explains that just as the sinner is punished for uttering forbidden words of lashon hara, all the more so he is punished for the sacred utterances that he failed to speak—such as divrei-Torah and appropriate rebuke of a colleague.

This then explains the matter of the two birds brought by the metzora on the day of his purification. The bird that is slaughtered serves to atone for the forbidden words that he should not have uttered; hence, this bird is prevented from chirping anymore. The live bird, however, serves to atone for divrei-Torah and rebukes that he should have uttered, but failed to do so. Hence, this bird remains alive and is sent out over the fields to continue chirping; this indicates that he must travel from place to place to teach others the ways of Hashem and His Torah. This is the gist of his explanation.

How nicely this also clarifies why the metzora is instructed to bring: **“cedar wood, and a crimson tongue of wool, and hyssop.”** As Rashi explains, the cedar wood symbolizes that the lesions were due to arrogance, while the crimson wool and hyssop symbolize that this person, as a consequence, must demean himself like a worm and like a lowly hyssop. Once again, it is surprising that he is required to bring cedar wood symbolizing arrogance; seemingly, he should have only brought the tongue of crimson wool and the hyssop symbolizing humility—the desired tikun.

Yet, the explanation is the one provided by the Likutei Yehudah in the name of the Chidushei HaRim. It comes to teach us that in the service of Hashem, at times it is prohibited to employ the attribute of humility. In fact, there are times when the exact opposite is called for; one must adorn the attribute of arrogance from the realm of kedushah, as illustrated by the passuk (Divrei HaYamim II 17, 6): **“ויגבה לבו בדרכי ה'—his heart was elevated in the ways of Hashem.** We see that if a person conducts himself with inappropriate humility, as atonement he is required to bring a korban with cedar wood—symbolizing that in the service of Hashem, a person must elevate himself like a cedar tree. This is the gist of his explanation.

Thus, we can suggest that this is the nature of the tikun provided by the two birds. The bird that is sacrificed atones for prohibited speech such as lashon hara and mockery; whereas, the live bird atones for speech within the realm of kedushah—such as words of Torah or proper rebuke—which he should have spoken and shared with others rather than remaining silent. Therefore, corresponding to the utterance of lashon hara stemming from a sense of arrogance and superiority over his fellow Jew, he is instructed to lower himself and demean himself like a hyssop. Corresponding to the words of Torah and rebuke, which he failed to utter--stemming from a sense of misguided humility—he is instructed to bring cedar wood, illustrating that he should have elevated himself to serve Hashem: **“His heart was elevated in the ways of Hashem.”**

### One Must Leave the House in Order to Teach Torah to Others

Continuing on along this exalted path, let us tackle the issue of the difference between human afflictions and house afflictions. We find a magnificent passage in the Gemara illustrating the greatness of Abaye and Rava, while they were still young children learning Torah from Rabbah. We learn in the Gemara (Berachos 48a):

**“Abaye and Rava were sitting before Rabbah; אמר להו רבה”**—Rabbah asked them, “To Whom do we direct our Berachos?” They replied, “To the Merciful One.” **“ורחמנא היכי יתיב”**—Next he asked, “And where does the Merciful One dwell?” **“רבא אחוי לשמי טללא”**—Rava responded by pointing toward the ceiling. **“אביי נפיק לברא אחוי כלפי שמיא”**—Abaye went outside and pointed toward the heavens. **“אמר להו רבה תרווייהו”**—Rabbah said to them, “Both of you will grow up to be great Torah scholars.” The Gemarah concludes: **“והיינו דאמרי”**—this exemplifies the saying: Small pumpkins are discernible as soon as they sprout from the vine. Similarly, it was obvious, even in their youth, that Abaye and Rava were destined to become great Torah scholars. Let us try and understand the great wisdom inherent in the responses of the young Abaye and Rava—which impressed Rabbah so much that he immediately perceived and attested to their future greatness in Torah scholarship.

In this year’s essay for parshas Lech Lecha, we discussed at length the precocious wisdom exemplified by Abaye and Rava. In truth, they are not really disagreeing with one another. Rather, each of them is revealing a different facet regarding the service of Hashem--**“אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים”**—both are illustrations of divine truth. We find this dichotomy concerning Chanoch. The **passuk** describing Chanoch states (Bereishis 5, 24): **“ויהתלך חנוך את האלקים ואיננו כי לקח אותו אלקים”**—**and Chanoch walked with G-d; then he was no more, for G-d had taken him.** The Targum Yonatan comments: **“ופלח חנוך בקושטא קדם ה' והא ליתוהי עם דיירי ארעא, ארום אתנגיד וסליק לרקיעא במימר קדם ה' וקרא שמייה מיטטרוון ספרא רבא.”** Chanoch truly served Hashem; alas, he was no longer present among the inhabitants of earth; for he ascended to the heavens by Hashem’s decree; he was then named Metatron, the great scribe.

The Chasam Sofer (Bereishis) comments that Chanoch, while still alive in this world, separated himself from all other human beings so as not to be corrupted by them. He remained isolated with HKB”H in sanctity and purity. As his reward, he ascended to heaven while still alive and was transformed into the “malach” Matat (מט”ט). In contrast, we do not find that Avraham Avinu ascended alive to the heavens to become a “malach.” For, he chose a different path. Rather than remaining isolated all day long communicating with HKB”H, he chose to fraternize with others outside of his home in order to bring them closer to Hashem.

The Chasam Sofer explains that Avraham Avinu realized that this was not the purpose for which man was created; he was not created for the purpose of ascending to heaven alive



and transforming into an angel. HKB”H has myriads of angelic creatures above in the heavens. Hence, he created man to serve Hashem in the capacity of a human being. He is meant to associate with other human beings and to introduce them to Hashem and His Torah. If man successfully fulfills this noble task then, after he dies, he merits to become even greater than the ministering angels—the “malachei ha’sharet.” This concludes the gist of his remarks.

We can now begin to comprehend to some small degree the magnitude of Abaye and Rava’s wisdom. For, when Rabbah asked them: “ורחמנא היכי יתיב”—**and where does the Merciful One dwell?**—he was asking them how does man make HKB”H King of the Universe. By remaining in the study hall and pointing upward, Rava insinuated that one must sit in the “beit-midrash” and engage in Torah study—dedicating oneself entirely to Hashem. In this manner, a person is able to overcome the yetzer—in keeping with the dictum (Kiddushin 30b): “אם פגע בך מנוול זה משכהו לבית המדרש”—if you encounter this vile one, drag him into the “beit-midrash.”

Notwithstanding, after one has learned for oneself how to live according to Hashem’s precepts, one is then obligated to teach others how to do so as well. Hence, Abaye cleverly saw fit to expand on Rava’s answer. By stepping outside, he hinted that it is necessary to leave the confines of the “beit-midrash” in order to draw outsiders nearer to Hashem. This doctrine is exemplified by Avraham Avinu (Bereishis 18, 1): “והוא יושב פתח האהל כחום היום”—**and he was sitting at the entrance to the tent in the heat of the day.** Rashi comments on this **passuk**: “לראות אם יש עובר ושב”—**he was on the lookout for passersby in order to bring them into his home.** Our master, Sar Shalom of Belz, zy”a, provides the following clarification of Rashi’s comment: “לראות”—**אם יש עובר**—Avraham was on the lookout for those committing transgressions, “aveirot”—**“ושב”**—so that he could instruct them in the ways of teshuvah—**“ויכניסם לביתו”**—and then bring them into the spiritual confines and protection of his home. [Translator’s note: Note the connection between the word **עובר** with “aveirot” and **ושב** with teshuvah.]

Accordingly, we find that both Rava’s and Abaye’s viewpoints represent divine truth. Clearly, at the outset, one must act in accordance with Rava’s point of view—immersing oneself in the study of Torah day and night. For, if a person does not engage in Torah study himself, he will not be qualified to guide and influence others. As we have learned (B.M. 107b): “קשוט עצמך ואחר”—**first correct yourself and then correct others.** Nevertheless, after one has performed his due diligence—having toiled in the “beit-midrash”—he must step outside in accordance

with the viewpoint of Abaye. He must draw others near, to learn Torah and to serve Hashem. Even Rava would agree to this.

## Human Afflictions for Arrogance House Afflictions for Misguided Humility

We can now shed some light on the distinction between human afflictions and house afflictions. Human afflictions appear as a punishment for lashon hara—a sin emanating from the klipah of arrogance, when one feels superior to his fellow Jew. For, if he was truly humble, and truly recognized his own numerous deficiencies, and simultaneously recognized his fellow-Jew’s many positive qualities, exceeding his own, he would not have dared speak lashon hara about this other person.

As a consequence, on the day of his purification, after performing complete, sincere teshuvah, HKB”H commanded him to bring two birds. The bird to be slaughtered was brought to atone for having uttered lashon hara; the live bird, which continued to chirp, was intended to teach him and admonish him not to stray to the other extreme. It is not proper to remain silent when one is obligated to speak. Rather, he should make amends for his lashon hara by uttering words of Torah. The Gemara teaches us (Arachin 15b): “מה תקנתו של מספרי לשון הרע, אם תלמיד חכם הוא יעסוק בתורה”—**what is the remedy for those who speak lashon hara? If he is a Torah scholar, he should engage in Torah study.** For this very same reason, he is also required to bring cedar wood, crimson wool and hyssop. These indicate to him that from that moment forward, he should conduct himself with humility and a lowly demeanor reminiscent of the worm and hyssop. Conversely, in the service of Hashem, he should stand proud and exemplify the arrogance of kedushah, like a majestic cedar tree.

Concerning house afflictions, however, HKB”H brings the lesions for an entirely different reason. There, the house owner’s flaw is not arrogance, but, on the contrary, he suffers from misguided humility. In truth, he possesses many hidden talents—be they in the realm of Torah-scholarship or in the performance of acts of kindness and good deeds. Everyone possesses unique strengths and can excel in his own way. So much so that he is capable of following the advice of Abaye—to abandon the confines of one’s home in order to teach others Torah and to engage in acts of chesed. Yet, this person adopted a demeanor of inappropriate humility, “anava pesulah”—insinuating that he is worthless and devoid of merit. He fell prey to the persuasions of the yetzer hara—convincing him falsely that he is unworthy to study Torah or to engage in acts of chesed.

In this light, we can appreciate why HKB”H visits lesions on the walls of the house and not on the actual person. He is conveying the message that the walls of the house which enclose him and safeguard him from the external environment, have to some degree prevented him from engaging in Torah-study and the performance of chesed. They represent afflictions that obstruct his path--preventing him from fulfilling his obligations in the service of Hashem. Thus, he is commanded to tear them down, so that they no longer impede him from fulfilling his duties.

### “He Blew into His Nostrils the Soul of Life”

The way to overcome the misguided belief of “anava pesulah”—not to mistakenly believe that he has nothing to contribute to others—is to always remember the passuk concerning the creation of man (Bereishis 2, 7): **“וַיִּיצֶר ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן הָאָדָמָה, וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָיו אֶת נֶשְׁמַת חַיִּים—and Hashem G-d formed the man of soil from the earth, and blew into his nostrils the soul of life; and man became a living soul.** For this reason, the Gemara teaches us (Kiddushin 30b): **“שְׁלֹשָׁה שׁוֹתֵפִין הֵן בְּאָדָם, הַקֶּבֶה וְאָבִיו—three partners collaborate to form a human being—HKB”H, his father and his mother.** Rashi explains that the two parents form the body, while HKB”H breathes the neshamah into the child.

Accordingly, every Jew, no matter who he is, conceals within his being a pure neshamah—a piece of the divine from above. We express this phenomenon in our daily, morning prayers: **“אֱלֹקֵי נִשְׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא, אֶתָּה בְּרֵאתָהּ, וְאֶתָּה יִצַרְתָּהּ, וְאֶתָּה נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי, וְאֶתָּה מְשַׁמְרָהּ—My G-d, the neshamah that you have placed within me, it is pure; you created it; you formed it; you breathed it into me; and you safeguard it within me.** Owing to this divine portion that every Jew receives from HKB”H, every Jew possesses a unique portion in the Torah and in the service of Hashem—distinct from his fellow-Jew. This fact is expressed in the formula of the middle berachah of the three silent devotions recited on Shabbas: **“קְדָשֵׁינוּ—sanctify us with Your mitzvos and provide us with our portion of Your Torah.**

We can now appreciate Rashi’s comment based on the words of the divine Tanna, Rashb”y: **“lesions afflicting them are good news, because the Emorim hid treasures of gold in the walls of their houses all forty years that Yisrael were in the desert; and as a result of the affliction, he breaks down the house and finds them.”** Rashi is hinting to us that the Emorim—the forces of impurity—conceal from man his true gifts and treasures. They do not want him to realize that in the depths of his neshamah, he possesses untold riches of Torah knowledge and devotion

to Hashem. By concealing this truth, he persuades a person to remain within the confines of his home—refraining from going out to teach Torah and to perform acts of chesed.

Consequently, in His infinite mercy and kindness, HKB”H visits lesions upon the walls of a person’s house. This prompts a person to destroy the walls of the house that enclose him—revealing the wealth of Torah knowledge and devotion to Hashem concealed within the depths of his neshamah. In this manner, he will be able to build his house anew, founded on kedushah and taharah. Thus, he will be able to determine when to enter his house to learn Torah for himself and when it is appropriate to leave the four walls of his house in order to teach others Torah and to engage in acts of chesed.

This explains quite beautifully why HKB”H commanded the owner of the house to approach the kohen (Vayikra 14, 35): **“the one to whom the house belongs shall come and declare to the kohen, saying: ‘Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house.’”** For, it is the kohen’s prowess to leave the confines of his house in order to teach Torah to others and to instruct others in the proper service of Hashem—as the passuk states (Malachi 2, 7): **“כִּי שִׁפְתֵי כֹהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ דַעַת וְתוֹרָה יִבְקֶשׁוּ מִפִּיהוּ כִּי—for the lips of the kohen should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek teaching from his mouth; for he is an agent of Hashem, Master of Legions.** Therefore, it is only fitting that he be the instrument to heal the owner of the house, who failed to vacate the confines of his home in order to teach Torah to others.

### Keeping One’s Torah to Oneself Constitutes Theft and Miserliness

With illuminated eyes, let us now compare Rashb”y’s remarks—that house afflictions represent good tidings—with the statement in the Gemara—that house afflictions represent a punishment for theft and stinginess. Based on what we have learned, it is quite evident that a person who does not endeavor to uncover the stores of Torah knowledge and devotion to Hashem contained within his being in order to share them with others, is in effect stealing from others. For, these endowments were only granted to him from above, so that he would teach them to others. The Sefer Chassidim expresses this idea as follows (530):

**“וְכָל מִי שֶׁגִּילָה לּוֹ הַקֶּבֶה דָּבָר וְאִינוּ כּוֹתְבֵהוּ וְיִכּוֹל לְכַתּוֹב, הָרִי גּוֹזֵל מִי שֶׁגִּילָה לּוֹ, כִּי לֹא גָלָה לּוֹ אֶלָּא לְכַתּוֹב, דְּכַתִּיב (תְּהִלִּים כֶּה-יֵד) סוּד ה' לִירְאִיו וּבְרִיתוֹ לְהוֹדִיעֵם, וְכַתִּיב (מִשְׁלֵי ה-טז) יִפְצוּ מַעֲיֵנוֹתֶיךָ חוּצָה, וְזֶה שְׁכָתוֹב (קֹהֶלֶת יב-יג) יִבִּיא בְּמִשְׁפַּט עַל כָּל נַעֲלָם, שְׁגוֹרֵם שְׁנַעֲלָם, אִם טוֹב שֶׁגִּילָה לּוֹ, אִם רַע שֶׁאִינָה כּוֹתְבָהּ.”**

Anyone who receives revelations from HKB”H, and is able to record them, and does not, is stealing from He who revealed to him. HKB”H revealed this knowledge to him for the sole purpose that he would write it down. By failing to do so, he causes it to disappear.

Therefore, in order to remedy this matter, HKB”H visits lesions upon the walls of a house, prompting the person to tear the walls down that prevent him from stepping out of his own private confines. Thus, he realizes that he is obliged to step out of his personal confines in order to return that which he stole. By influencing others with his Torah and devotion, he is able to right the wrong. This is the implication of the Gemara cited above: **“the kohen shall command and they shall clear the house”**; a Baraisa taught regarding this passuk: **he gathered in money that did not belong to him; let the kohen come and scatter his property**. The Gemara is alluding to the Torah knowledge that the kohen influences the house owner to spread among pupils outside the confines of his home.

This also explains the matter of house afflictions that are visited upon the house as a result of stinginess. A person should not covet and withhold the skills and aptitudes that he possesses within his being—causing him not to teach others and not to engage in acts of chesed. The Gemara above proved this fact from the passuk: **“and the owner of the house shall come”**; and a Baraita was taught in the academy of Rabbi Yishmael: **G-d visits tzara’as on the house of someone who keeps his house to himself**. In other words, it is referring to a person who encloses himself within his own four amos and does not share his Torah-knowledge with others.

We can now explain why the owner of the house is required to bring for his purification-korban two live, pure birds. His primary atonement is via the live bird, as indicated by the language of the passuk: **“He shall set the live bird free toward the outside of the city upon the open field; thus he shall provide atonement for the house, and it shall become purified.”** In other words, he should leave his house and go out of the city to influence others with his Torah and devotion. This will effectively atone for the

house that enclosed him and prevented him from venturing out to influence others with his Torah. Nevertheless, he must still bring as a korban the slaughtered bird; this will serve as a reminder that when he does venture out of his house, he must take care not to fall prey to arrogance and lashon hara, chas v’shalom.

### “Expound and Be Rewarded”— Go out and Expound for Others

At this point, we can truly appreciate the tremendous insight provided by our blessed sages with their pronouncement: **“בית” —המנוגע לא היה ולא עתיד להיות, ולמה נכתב דרוש וקבל שכו”ר—there never was a tzara’as -afflicted house, nor will there ever be one in the future; so why was this law written in the Torah? G-d is telling us to expound the passage and be rewarded.** In reality, it is unlikely that afflictions will appear on a house with the specifications detailed by the Torah. Notwithstanding, HKB”H transmitted this subject in the Torah she’b’chtav, so that: **“דרוש” —וקבל שכו”ר—we would expound the passage and be rewarded for our efforts.**

In other words, we are meant to elucidate the passage and comprehend the vital message it contains. Any person who fails to utilize the unique tools and abilities HKB”H endowed him with—whether it be in Torah scholarship, or dedicated service to Hashem, or in the performance of acts of chesed—to go out and influence others, causes HKB”H, chas v’shalom, to visit afflictions upon his house in various forms, G-d help us. These lesions are intended to teach a person that he is obliged to leave the confines of his house and to help his brethren standing outside.

Let us just add one final, pleasant tidbit. This is the point our blessed sages so elegantly alluded to us with their pronouncement: **“There never was a tzara’as -afflicted house, nor will there ever be one in the future; so why was this law written in the Torah? G-d is telling us to expound the passage and be rewarded.”** In other words, this passage was written in the Torah to teach us the vital lesson: **“דרוש וקבל שכו”ר**—do not keep your Torah knowledge to yourself. Rather, step out of your exclusive confines so as to teach others and be rewarded for your efforts.

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