

# CHAYUS

## *A Shabbos Stimulus*

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

*In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ע"ה and Tzvi Daniel ע"ה ben א"ט David שי Ainsworth  
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein*

Erev Shabbos Parshas Metzora, 5782 – April 8, 2022  
Shabbos Hagadol

ערב שבת פרשת מצורע, ז' ניסן, ה'תשפ"ב  
שבת הגדול

כתר שם טוב

### PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Adapted from  
Keter Shem Tov

#### Preparing for Prayer

Some people find that they need to fortify themselves in advance of their prayers, in order to maintain proper concentration during prayer, enabling them to at least avoid distracting thoughts, or better yet, to attach themselves to G-d appropriately while praying. They achieve this by reciting Tehillim or studying Torah before praying.

They then stand and pray while their minds are filled with Torah and are receptive to intense concentration. On the other hand, others find that if they recite Tehillim or study for too long, they exhaust their mental energies and have no concentration left for their prayers.

Our Sages state regarding the large offerings of the wealthy and the meager offerings of paupers, that “whether one increases or decreases, the main thing is that they focus their hearts to heaven,” meaning that they are truly sincere in their offering.

The same is true of prayer: the personal decision whether to increase in Torah and Tehillim before prayer or to decrease must depend on the ultimate goal of focusing one’s heart to heaven during the actual prayers.

*Keter Shem Tov, Par. 120*

גאולה

### GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah  
Translated by Yaakov Paley

#### It Is Not What It Looks Like!

*“The home owner comes and tells the kohen, saying: Something like a plague has appeared to me in the house” (Metzora 14:35).*

Why must he use the term *kenega*, “**Something like a plague**”? Because in truth, it is not a plague, but something positive. Rashi explains that when *tzara’as*-stricken walls were demolished, buried treasures were uncovered. This raises a question: Why could G-d not allow the Jews to discover treasures in a positive way, without contracting *tzara’as*?! Rather, G-d wished to demonstrate that events that appear negative are

a means of facilitating great goodness. Our exile seems like a terrible plague, but in truth, it is only “something like a plague [that] has appeared to me,” i.e., its appearance is evil in the eyes of limited mortals. But its greater goodness will be revealed in the era of redemption, when our own eyes will see that the exile was simply a road to the greatest possible goodness.

*Kedushas Tziyon*

## A Zav And An Earthenware Vessel

### The Verse:

A man who experiences unusual discharge is rendered ritually impure and conveys impurity to people, objects, and vessels that come into contact with him. Once his discharge ceases, he is to count seven clean days and immerse in a *mikvah*. Then, he reverts to a ritually pure state. A man with this impurity is called a *zav*.

Concerning the *zav* the Torah states: “An earthenware vessel which the man with discharge will touch, shall be broken. And any wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water” (*Vayikra* 15:12).

### The Rashi:

*An earthenware vessel which the man with the discharge will touch*—One might think that even if he touches it from the outside of the vessel (it will also become unclean), as is taught in *Toras Kohanim* (15:143), which concludes: “What form of touching is considered as if he touched the whole vessel? When he moves it.” [Meaning, if a man with a discharge moves an earthenware vessel, it becomes unclean].

### The Reasonable Explanation:

Rashi seems to be addressing this question: Our verse implies that a *zav* can defile an earthenware vessel through simply touching its outer surface. But previously, in *parshas Shemini*, we learned that an impure insect could only defile an earthenware vessel if it entered its interior space (*Vayikra* 11:33). Rashi reasoned that the reader may distinguish between an impure insect which is a lesser level of impurity and the *zav* which is a more severe form of impurity. Perhaps the insect cannot defile an earthenware vessel through contact with its outer surface, but a *zav* can convey impurity through that form of contact.

To dispel this assumption, Rashi cites *Toras Kohanim* which raises the same possibility, “One might think that even if he touches it from the outside of the vessel (it will also become unclean,)” and then refers the reader to the continuation of the *Toras Kohanim*. In that continuation, *Toras Ko-*

*hanim* employs a *gezeiras shava*—a Talmudic hermeneutic which uses analogues words in different verses to apply law from one context to another—to prove that the meaning of “touch” here does not mean contact with the outside surface of the earthenware vessel.

But, then, what is the meaning of “touch” in this verse? Rashi therefore cites the conclusion of *Toras Kohanim*, “What form of touching is considered as if he touched the whole vessel? When he moves it.” Touching the surface of the earthenware vessel does not contaminate it, but moving the vessel does.

### The Background For The Explanation:

Rashi—who aims to explain the verse in its straightforward manner and as lucidly as possible—always supplies all the information necessary to understand the verse. He would never withhold an integral part of his argument on the assumption that the reader would research it independently. In this commentary, Rashi does not quote *Toras Kohanim*’s refutation of the assumption that the word “touch” refers to touching the outside surface of the vessel. He only alludes to it by saying “as is taught in *Toras Kohanim*.” It must be, then, that Rashi does not rely on *Toras Kohanim*’s *gezeira shava* to elucidate the meaning of “touch,” but rather, his proof lies somewhere in the words he selected to quote from *Toras Kohanim*.

### The Explanation:

In the straightforward understanding of scripture, a seemingly repetitive verse does not pose a problem so long as it introduces some novel law or idea. If a verse offers nothing novel, then its repetitiveness must be addressed.

Our verse seems to be superfluous, because the law it introduces is self-evident and obvious. In the previous verses the Torah taught that a *zav* conveys impurity to people who touch him, and that he can convey impurity to something he didn’t directly touch, if that item was below something he sat upon. This is a stringent form of impurity. It

would seem obvious, then, that he defiles a vessel that he directly touches. Why is this verse necessary?

This leads Rashi to the possibility that a reader might assume that the novelty of the verse is its ruling that a *zav* can defile an earthenware vessel through merely touching its surface. To bolster this assumption, Rashi says, “as is taught in *Toras Kohanim*” referring not to the refutation of this assumption, but to the assumption itself. In other words, the fact that *Toras Kohanim* raises this possibility is proof for Rashi that it must be contended with.

Rashi refutes this assumption with a nuanced reading of our verse:

The previous verse stated, “Whatever the man with the discharge touches... shall remain impure.” (*Vayikra* 15:11) The words in our verse, “An earthenware vessel **which the man with the discharge will touch**,” seem entirely repetitive. The Torah could have just continued from the previous verse—“Whatever the man with the discharge touches... shall remain impure.... An earthenware vessel shall be broken”?

Rashi, therefore, concluded that the repetition of the word “touch” refers to a new form of touching, a touch that is comparable to touching *the entire vessel*—i.e. moving it. Thus, Rashi cites the conclusion of *Toras Kohanim* which bears out this point:

“What form of touching is considered as if he touched the whole vessel? When he moves it.”

It was the close reading of the verse’s repetition

of “touch” itself, that led Rashi to interpret it as he did, not the *gezeira shava* employed by *Toras Kohanim*.

### The Deeper Dimension:

A human being is compared to an “earthenware vessel” because man was created from the earth.

The human being cannot be contaminated from “its surface,” meaning, from its natural contact with the material world. Being of the earth, human beings naturally gravitate toward material comforts and pleasures. Therefore, although they certainly do not aid a person’s spiritual growth, they do not defile his soul either because he is not expected to be an unnatural human being.

A *zav* is not a naturally occurring impurity, it is the result of a person’s lifestyle and health choices (See Chinuch, commandment 178). This represents a conscious form of impurity, not the relatively benign material pursuits of a human being. So, perhaps a *zav* can contaminate the vessel from mere surface-level contact. Maybe this form of intentional materialism can contaminate the person?

Thus Rashi and *Toras Kohanim* clarify that “only a touch that is considered as if he touched the whole vessel can contaminate” the human being/earthenware vessel. Meaning, only a deliberate corruption of the individual can affect the person. But any incidental touch, even that of a *zav*, cannot contaminate the essence of a Jewish soul.

*Likkutei Sichot* vol. 17, p. 166ff.

סיפור חסידי

## ONCE UPON A CHASID

By Yanki Tauber

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### Strength In Numbers

*This is the law of one afflicted with leprosy... he shall be brought to the Kohen...* (Metzora 14:2)

Even if the leper is himself a Kohen, he must go and consult with another Kohen. For “a man can see all afflictions except for his own.”

- *The Talmud, Negaim* 2:5

When Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch was sixteen years old, his father entrusted him with the task of serving as a mashpia (a spiritual guide and mentor) to the young men in the chabad community.

Rabbi DovBer strongly encouraged his pupils to gather together in informal farbrengens to inspire, rebuke, and consult with one another in matters concerning the refinement of their character and their service of G-d. “Look at it this way,” said

Rabbi DovBer, “when two Jews get together and one tells the other what ails his heart, or if one notices a negative trait in his fellow and discusses it with him, the result is two G-dly souls taking on a single animal soul.”

Every Jew possesses both an animal and G-dly soul. The ‘animal soul’ is driven by the self-centered aspirations of physical life, and the ‘G-dly soul’, by the selfless quest to serve the Almighty. But the

animal soul, which is utterly self-oriented, has no interest in the triumph of her fellow animal soul; not so the G-dly soul, who’s only desire is that the will of her Creator be fulfilled. So when a person grapples alone with his spiritual ills, what we have is a one-on-one struggle of his two selves; but when two Jews get together, the animal soul of each is overwhelmed by a double onslaught of the Divine essence of man.

אור תורה

OHR TORAH

Translated by: Yechiel Krisch

Adapted from the teachings of the Mezritcher Maggid

Prayers With Results

Why were our ancestors answered whenever they prayed? Because they prayed with the Divine Name. Meaning, that they were answered because they prayed not for what they wanted, but for what G-d wanted. Namely, they prayed that the will of the Divine Name should conform to their desires.

Just as an attendant cannot hope to escort a

bride to her groom unless the groom wants the bride to approach, our ancestors understood that they could not hope to escort a prayer before G-d unless He desired it so. Therefore, they prayed with the Divine Name—beseeching G-d to make His will match their own desires. As such, their prayers were invariably answered.

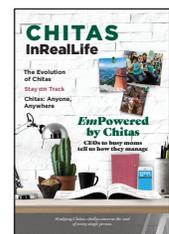
Or Torah, Par. 385

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

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