

# Metzora: Hardships and Happiness

Rabbi Naftali Rothstein, Northwest Yeshiva High School

## Leviticus 14:34

(34) When you enter the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I inflict an eruptive plague upon a house in the land you possess,

## ויקרא י"ד:ל"ד

(לד) כִּי תֵבְאוּ אֶל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר  
אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם לְאֶחְזָה וְנִתְתִי נֹגַע  
צֹרְעַת בַּבַּיִת אֶרֶץ אֶחְזַתְכֶם:

## Leviticus 13:2

(2) When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling, a rash, or a discoloration, and it develops into a scaly affection on the skin of his body, it shall be reported to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests.

## ויקרא י"ג:ב

(ב) אָדָם כִּי-יְהִי בְעוֹר-בְּשָׁרוֹ  
שָׂאת אִו־סֹפְחֹת אוֹ בְהֶרֶת וְהָיָה  
בְּעוֹר-בְּשָׁרוֹ לְנֹגַע צֹרְעַת וְהוּבֵא  
אֶל-אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ אֶל-אֶחָד מִבְּנָיו  
הַכֹּהֲנִים:

## Leviticus 13:29

(29) When a man or a woman has an affection on the head or in the beard,

## ויקרא י"ג:כ"ט

(כט) וְאִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה כִּי-יְהִי בּוֹ  
נֹגַע בְּרֹאשׁ אוֹ בְזָקָן:

## Leviticus 13:47

(47) When an eruptive affection occurs in a cloth of wool or linen fabric,

## ויקרא י"ג:מ"ז

(מז) וְהִבְגָּד כִּי-יְהִי בּוֹ נֹגַע  
צֹרְעַת בְּבִגְד צֹמֵר אוֹ בְּבִגְד  
פְּשֻׁתִים:

### Horayot 10a:15

As it is written: “When you come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, **and I shall place an eruptive plague in a house of the land of your possession**” (Leviticus 14:34).

**These are tidings informing them**, i.e., the Jewish people, **that an eruptive plague will come upon them** when they enter Eretz Yisrael; this is **the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Shimon says:** This verse serves to teach that the eruptive plague causes ritual impurity only when its origins are divine, **to the exclusion of an eruptive plague** that results from **circumstances beyond one’s control**, i.e., those that have a clear physical cause.

### Vayikra Rabbah 17:6

(6) It is written: "and I gave the plague of Tzaraat" (Vayikra 14:34) Rabbi Hiya learned - and is this [good] news for them that a plague will come upon them? Rabbi Shimon son of Yohai learned since the Canaanites heard that Yisrael were coming upon them, they got

### הוריות י"א:ט"ו

דכתיב (ויקרא יד, לד) ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחוזתכם בשורה היא להם שנגעים באים עליהם - דברי רבי יהודה. רבי שמעון אומר - פרט לנגעי אונסין.

### ויקרא רבה י"ז:ו'

(ו) וכתוב: ונתתי נגע צרעת, תני רבי חיא וכי בשורה היא להם שנגעים באים עליהם. תני רבי שמעון בן יוחאי כיון ששמעו כנענים שישראל באים עליהם עמדו והטמינו ממונם בבתים ובשדות, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא

up and they hid their money in their houses and in their fields . The Holy One Blessed Be He [Hash-m] said "I promised to your forefathers that I would enter their children to a land full of good" as it is said (Devarim 6:11) “ and houses full of good.” What did Hash-m do? He sent plagues in their houses [of Jews who settled in Israel] - and he [the owner of the house] would break it down and he would find there a treasure.

אָנִי הִבְטַחְתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיהֶם שְׂאֲנִי  
מִכְנִיס אֶת בְּנֵיהֶם לְאֶרֶץ מְלֵאָה  
כָּל טוֹב, שְׂנֵאָמֵר (דְּבָרִים ו, יא):  
וּבְתִים מְלֵאִים כָּל טוֹב, מָה  
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה מְגֵרָה  
נִגְעִים בְּבֵיתוֹ וְהוּא סוֹתְרוֹ וּמוֹצֵא  
בּוֹ סִימָא.

#### Rashi on Leviticus 14:34:1

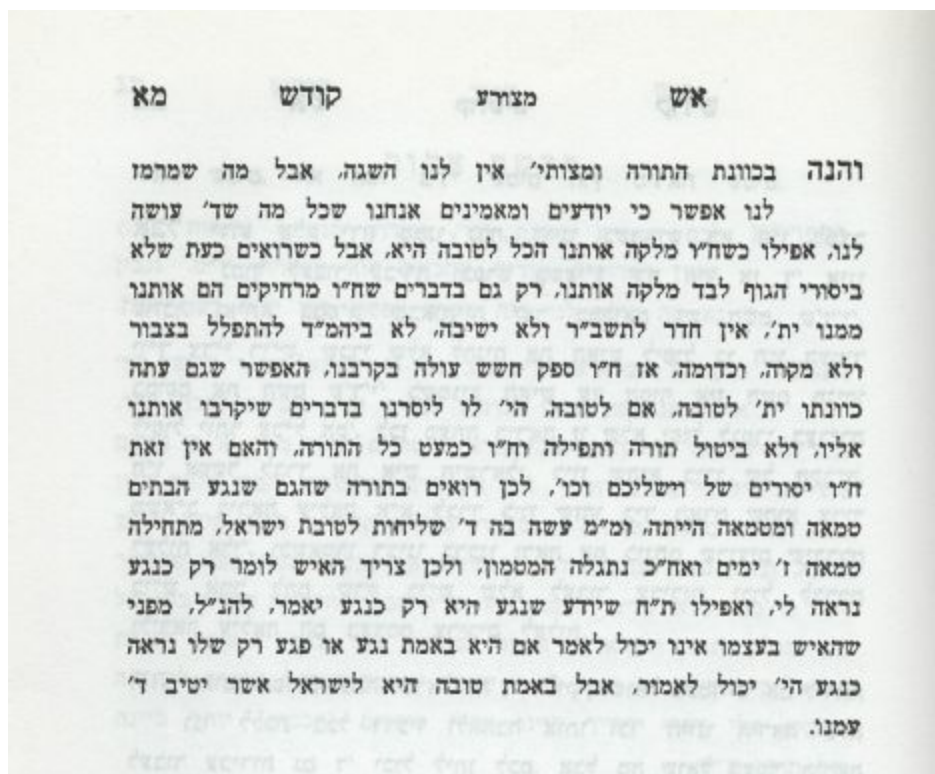
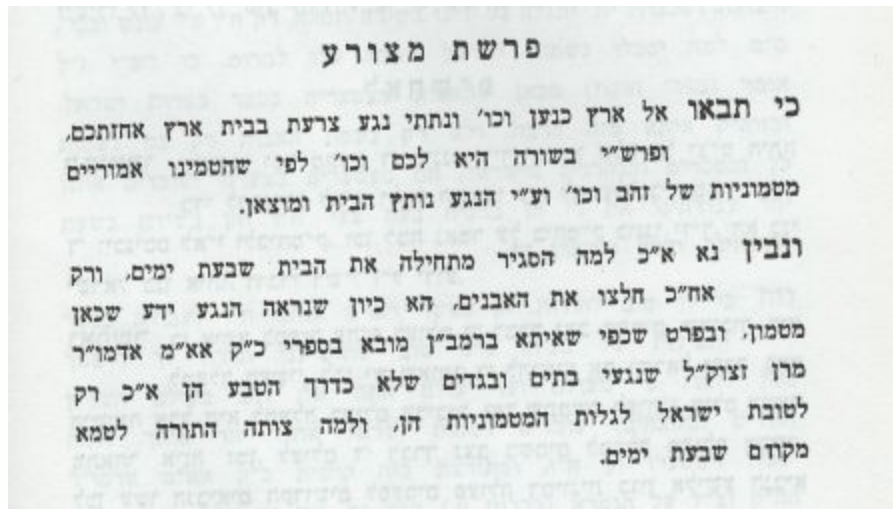
(1) וּנְתַתִּי נִגַע צָרַעַת [WHEN YOU COME TO THE LAND ...]I WILL PUT THE ERUPTIVE PLAGUE — This was an announcement to them that these plagues would come upon them (Sifra, Metzora, Section 5 4; Horayot 10a), because the Amorites concealed treasures of gold in the walls of their houses during the whole 40 years the Israelites were in the wilderness in order that these might not possess them when they conquered Palestine, and in consequence of the plague they would pull down the house and discover them (Leviticus Rabbah 17:6).

#### רש"י על ויקרא י"ד:ל"ד:א'

(א) וּנְתַתִּי נִגַע צָרַעַת. בְּשׂוֹרָה  
הִיא לָהֶם שֶׁהִנְגְעִים בָּאִים עֲלֵיהֶם;  
לְפִי שֶׁהִטְמִינוּ אֲמוֹרִיִּים מְטֻמְוֹנוֹת  
שֶׁל זָהָב בְּקִירוֹת בְּתֵיהֶם כָּל  
אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
בְּמִדְבָּר, וְעַל יְדֵי הִנְגַּע נֹתֵץ הַבַּיִת  
וּמוֹצֵאן (וִיקְרָא רַבָּה י"ז):

Aish Kodesh, Rabbi Kalonymus  
Kalman Shapira H"YD

אש קודש, האדמו"ר מפיאסצנה  
הי"ד



Leviticus 14:35-41

(35) the owner of the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, "Something like a plague has appeared upon my house." (36) The priest shall order the house cleared before the priest enters to examine the plague, so that nothing in the house may become unclean; after that the priest shall enter to examine the house. (37) If, when he examines the plague, the plague in the walls of the house is found to consist of greenish or reddish streaks that appear to go deep into the wall, (38) the priest shall come out of the house to the entrance of the house, and close up the house for seven days. (39) On the seventh day the priest shall return. If he sees that the plague has spread on the walls of the house, (40) the priest shall order the stones with the plague in them to be pulled out and cast outside the city into an unclean place. (41) The house shall be scraped inside all around, and the coating that is scraped off shall be dumped outside the city in an unclean place.

ויקרא י"ד:ל"ה-מ"א

(לה) וּבֹא אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַבַּיִת וְהִגִּיד  
לַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר כָּנָגַע נִרְאָה לִי בַבַּיִת:  
(לו) וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וּפָנּוּ אֶת-הַבַּיִת  
בְּטָרָם יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן לִרְאוֹת  
אֶת-הַנִּגָּע וְלֹא יִטְמָא כָּל-אֲשֶׁר  
בַּבַּיִת וְאַחַר כֵּן יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן לִרְאוֹת  
אֶת-הַבַּיִת: (לז) וְרָאָה אֶת-הַנִּגָּע  
וְהִנֵּה הַנִּגָּע בְּקִירַת הַבַּיִת  
שֶׁקַּעְרוֹרֹת יִרְקַרְקַת אוֹ אֲדַמְדַמֹּת  
וּמְרִיאֵיהֶן שֹׁפֵל מִן-הַקִּיר: (לח)  
וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן מִן-הַבַּיִת אֶל-פֶּתַח  
הַבַּיִת וְהִסְגִּיר אֶת-הַבַּיִת שִׁבְעַת  
יָמִים: (לט) וְשָׁב הַכֹּהֵן בַּיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְרָאָה וְהִנֵּה פָּשָׁה הַנִּגָּע  
בְּקִירַת הַבַּיִת: (מ) וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן  
וְחִלְצוּ אֶת-הָאֲבָנִים אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶן  
הַנִּגָּע וְהִשְׁלִיכוּ אֹתָהֶן אֶל-מַחוּץ  
לְעִיר אֶל-מְקוֹם טָמֵא: (מא)  
וְאֶת-הַבַּיִת יִקְצַע מִבַּיִת סָבִיב  
וְשִׁפְכוּ אֶת-הָעֶפֶר אֲשֶׁר הִקְצָו  
אֶל-מַחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל-מְקוֹם טָמֵא:

## **The Role of Suffering**

Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph. D.

<https://wholebeinginstitute.com/role-of-suffering/>

While it is part of our universal nature to seek pleasure and avoid pain, culture plays a central role in how we deal with suffering. In the West, we generally reject suffering. We see it as an unwelcome interruption of our pursuit of happiness. So we fight it, repress it, medicate it, or search for quick-fix solutions to get rid of it. In some cultures, especially in the East, suffering is acknowledged for the important role it plays in people's lives, in the meandering path toward enlightenment.

Wisdom emerges from the experience of suffering. When things go well, we rarely stop to ask questions about our lives. A difficult situation, however, often forces us out of our mindless state, causing us to reflect on our experiences. To be able to see deeply, to develop what King Solomon referred to as a wise heart, we must brave the eye of the storm.

Helen Keller, who in her lifetime knew much suffering, as well as joy, noted that “character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” .....

One of the most significant benefits of suffering is that it breeds a deep respect for reality, for what is. While the experience of joy connects us to the realm of infinite possibilities, the experience of pain reminds us of our limitations. When, despite all our effort, we get hurt, we are humbled by constraints that we sometimes fail to notice when

we're flying high. It seems to me more than symbolic that when in ecstasy we often lift our head up, to the heavens, to the infinite, and when in agony, we tend to cast our gaze down to earth, to the finite.

Rabbi Bunim of Pshischa says that we all need to walk around with two slips of paper in our pockets: the first slip with the Talmudic words "for my sake the world was created" and the second slip with the words from Genesis "I am but dust and ashes." The healthy psychological state resides somewhere in between the two messages, somewhere between hubris and humility. In the same way that the synthesis between hubris and humility breeds psychological health, combining ecstasy and agony establishes a healthy relationship with reality.

## **ישמח משה, מצורע ד':א'**

**Yismach Moshe, Metzora 4:1, Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum zt"l**

(א) **עוד** במדרש רבה (ויק"ר י"ז א') ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחוזתכם (ויקרא יד לד) זה שאמר הכתוב (תהלים עג א) אך טוב לישראל אלקים לברי לבב. נ"ל כי הפסוק אך טוב לישראל וגו', יש לפרש כי אלקים שהוא דין, גם כן טוב לישראל כי לישראל אוהבי שמו כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד, רק זו אם הם ברי לבב, דהיינו זך לבם באמונה ולבם נכון בטוח בה' שהכל לטובה, כמו ר' עקיבא (ברכות ס' ע"ב), ונחום איש גם זו (תענית כ"א ע"א), אז באמת נהפך הכל לטובה, והנה המופת וראיה לזה נתינת הנגע בקירות הבית, דנראה שהיא מכה משולחת שלא כדרך הטבע בשצף קצף, ובאמת ביארו רז"ל (ויק"ר י"ז ו') כי הוא לטובת ישראל כדי שימצאו מה שהטמינו האמוריים, ועל פי זה יתבאר המדרש, ודוק היטב כי נכון הוא בס"ד.

## **Happier (2007)**

Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph. D.

While I do not believe that things necessarily happen for the best, I know that **some people are able to make the best of things that happen.** Hardship, which we would never voluntarily invite into our life, can play an important role in our development; a struggle-free life is not always the best thing for us.

*Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Naftali Rothstein [naftali.r@gmail.com](mailto:naftali.r@gmail.com)*