

And the person with tzaraas in whom there is the affliction, his garments shall be rent, the hair of his head shall be unshorn, and he shall cloak himself up to his lips; he is to call out, “Contaminated, contaminated!” (13:45)

The *Yalkut Shemoni* explains that the *metzora* calls out to others: “*Tamei*, impure! *Tamei*, impure!” so that his pain will be publicized to others. Thus, they will *daven* for his cure. *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, says that having other Jews daven for their friend in need is not simply a laudable practice, but the designated purpose in Creation. He quotes the *Abarbanel* who explains why the Torah commences its introduction to the Creation of the world in the third person (*Bereishis bara Elokim*; In the beginning of G-d’s creation...), rather than Hashem speaking in first person (*Ani barasi*, I created...). This is so that human beings will glean the critical importance of humility. A person should never think, “It is all about me.” One should live a life of sharing with others, caring about others, doing for others. Life is a partnership, a coalescence of people working with one another for one another. We find that Hashem *Yisborach* “consulted” with the Heavenly Angels prior to creating Adam *HaRishon*, Primordial Man. This is recorded in the Torah: *Naaseh Adam*, “Let ‘us’ make man” (*Bereishis* 1:26).

Despite what the heretics might say in support of their heresy (“us” implies that Hashem required/had assistance, when this is certainly untrue) the Almighty countered that the heretics will preach heresy. Regardless of the venue/audience, the lack of integrity notwithstanding, they will do theirs. The people who read the account of Creation will become acutely aware that the *Gadol*, Great One, leader, manager, boss, one in charge, should always be willing to take/accept counsel from the smaller, younger, less-experienced novice. It is all about humility, and learning to share and care with/about others. This is the underlying motif/intention of *V’ahavta l’reicha kamocho*, “Love your fellow as (you love) yourself.”

Rav Zilberstein suggests that this idea is supported by the fact that all of us are not created equal: some are wealthy, some are not; some are brilliant, some are not; some are in good health, some are not. The list of disparities goes on. The purpose is so that we should be aware and reiterate in our minds that our life’s focus should not be directed on ourselves, but on others. We should think of others: What does my fellow need? How can I help? What can I do? To paraphrase the immortal words of *Horav Chaim Volozhiner*, *zl* (preface to *Nefesh HaChaim*), “Man is created *l’ho’il l’acharinei*, to assist others.”

One of the most satisfying feelings in life is the act of giving. It creates a positive energy that seems to gravitate to others. Giving and helping are so meaningful, so special, especially in the manner that they influence others to follow suit. I think that we can take this one step further. There are individuals who give, and there are individuals who are giving persons. One who gives does not necessarily give of himself/herself. They give something which usually belongs to them. A giving

person shares himself with the beneficiary. I recently saw a quote (anonymous attribution), “Life is not (only) about making others happy. Life is about sharing your happiness with others.” In other words: I will be happy to give, to contribute, to assist, but what is mine is mine. I enjoy seeing that you are happy, and I am happy that in some measure I have played a role in facilitating your happiness, but my happiness is my happiness. I give – I do not necessarily want to open up my personal celebrations to others. That is the difference between one who gives and one who is a giving person. When one gives, he still remains distinct, even distant from the beneficiary. When one is a giving person, he bonds and builds a unified relationship with the beneficiary.