

When you arrive in the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I will place a tzaraas affliction upon a house. In the land of your possession (14:34)

Rashi teaches us that Moshe *Rabbeinu* brought good tidings when he informed the people that they would be subject to *nigei battim*, plagues that would strike their homes. Apparently, when the Emorites heard that the Jews were coming to attack them, they hid their gold, silver and jewelry in the walls of their homes. As a result of the *negaim*, the homes had to be dismantled, exposing the hidden treasures. To recap, the individual who acted inappropriately was punished with the destruction of his home. As a result of the punishment, he became the lucky winner of a hidden treasure which otherwise would never have been discovered.

The *Sefer Moshav Zekeinim* asks the obvious question. *Negaim* are Heaven-sent as a punishment for a stingy eye, a penurious attitude towards helping others. Why should the punishment be the harbinger and catalyst for reward? The *Aruch HaShulchan* asks a similar question. Does Hashem not have another way of rewarding this person? Why does the individual have to lose his home, just to have the hidden treasure revealed?

We must say that this is an indication of Hashem's overriding love for His People. Even when they deserve punishment, Hashem eases off – and when it is absolutely necessary that extreme suffering be a part of the punishment, Hashem “finds” a way to somehow ameliorate the difficulty. Everything that might appear as outrageously challenging has a silver lining. We do not always see it, however, because, for the most part, we are not looking.

L'Hisaden Ba'ahavasecha quotes *Horav Shmuel Abba Deutch*, who expounds on the concept of “patience” during periods of travail, relying on our deep-rooted faith to give the situation/challenge that we are confronting time to play itself out. The *Mechaber*, in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 230:5, writes: “A person should be accustomed to say, ‘Whatever Hashem does is for the good.’” What is the meaning of “be accustomed”? Does a person undergo trials and tribulations daily, that he should get used to articulating this statement? Furthermore, why is it essential that one vocalize this statement? Is thinking about it, accepting it in one's heart, not sufficient? What happened to *emunah*, faith?

Horav Moshe, zl, m'Kubrin interprets the *pasuk*, *Atzabehem kesef v'zahav*, “Their idols are silver and gold, *maasei y'dei adam*, ‘handiwork of man’ (*Tehillim* 115:3). *Atzabehem*, their *atzvus*, (source of) their sadness, is (because they think that) their silver and gold is the handiwork of man.” They think that the material success which they enjoy is the result of their own prowess and brilliance. Thus, *peh lahem v'lo yidabeiru* (which is usually translated as), “They have a mouth, but cannot speak,” (is homiletically rendered as) “they feel that they have reason to use their mouth in prayer. Why pray if the success is self-generated?”

An inspiring homily, but why should one be sad just because he believes in his own success? Just because he does not see whatever success he has achieved as a gift from Hashem does not necessarily engender sadness. Furthermore, should the sadness catalyze a lack of prayer? Rav Deutch quotes the **Baal Shem Tov, zl**, who interprets the *pasuk*, “*He'emanti ki adaber*, “I have kept faith, although I say” (*Tehillim* 116:10), the faith which I have; my entire conviction is in the merit of my *dibur*, speech, my constant articulation and reiteration of my belief in Hashem. Otherwise, his *emunah* will wane. One must speak *emunah*. Thinking, believing in one's heart, is insufficient. It must be constantly repeated.

Returning to the *pasuk*, *atzvus* is the result of a lack of faith. How does one fall to such a nadir that sadness becomes his companion? The answer is: They do not use their mouths to articulate their *emunah* in Hashem, allowing them to fall into the trap of believing that their silver and gold are self-generated.

Having said this, we understand why one should become accustomed to a positive outlook concerning everything in life. When a person confronts a *nisayon*, challenge/test, the *yetzer tov*, good inclination, is removed from him, so that the challenge can be “challenging.” All he has in his arsenal to combat the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, is his *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, which he has stored and with which he has been able to fortify himself. This is very much like a vaccine used to prevent an illness. Therefore, even when life appears to be good, when the sun of good fortune seems to be smiling on him, he should fortify himself with the constant repetition of a positive outlook. This will forearm his resolve and give him the strength to overcome the potential obstacles to his faith.