

"And I will place a tzaraas affliction upon a house in the land of your possession... and he shall declare to the Kohen, saying, 'something like a plague has appeared to Me on the house.. and the Kohen shall quarantine the house for a seven day period.'" (14:34,35,38)

A plague on a house was apparently a supernatural occurrence. *Rashi* cites the *Midrash* that says when the Canaanites saw that their end was near, they hid their valuables in the walls of their homes. Hashem placed affliction upon a house so that when the house was to be dismantled, the Jewish owner would find the hidden treasures. Consequently, the plague was a blessing in disguise. We may question the reason for a seven-day quarantine on the house. If the sole purpose of the quarantine was to expose the treasure, the mere indication of a plague should signal the "demolition crew" to search for the treasure. What lesson can be learned? In his *sefer*, *Eish Kodesh*, the **Piazesner Rebbe, zl**, offers a novel insight.

Indeed, we have no idea of the hidden motives behind a given *mitzvah*. We can, however, attempt to glean valuable lessons to which the *Torah* alludes, since we know that everything Hashem does for us is an expression of His beneficence. Even when we suffer, when we are subject to denigration and persecution in the most cruel manner, we know that Hashem has a positive purpose for His decrees. When the persecutions do not seem to make sense, when the afflictions run counter to the goal of Jewish survival, then we have a problem coming to terms with them. We must remember that the Piazesner wrote his *sefer* when he was interred in the concentration camp. He wrote at a time when the decree from Hashem destroyed *shuls*, *mikvaos*, schools and *yeshivos* for children, through which the spiritual fiber of our people would be maintained. When we are faced with such decrees, our faith might be open to question. Can it be that even now Hashem is doing this for our good? What good can there be if there are no *yeshivos*, no *shuls*, nowhere to go to nourish and maintain our spiritual persona?

This is the underlying message of the seven-day quarantine prior to dismantling the house and discovering its hidden treasure. During these seven days there does not seem to be rationale for the seven day period. First, the house is sealed for what might seem to be no apparent reason. Later, it is rendered *tamei*, a decision which is the precursor for exposing its previously concealed treasure. Here we have an instance in which we cannot rationalize the quarantine of the house, yet we find out later that it was for a specific purpose. We are taught that there are situations when we simply do not understand why Hashem acts in the manner that He does. We soon discover, however, the positive results of this seemingly ambiguous behavior. As always, we are enjoined to trust in Hashem regardless of the questions we may have. One day our questions will all be answered.