

THE EYE REPRESENTS OUR PERSPECTIVE

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

This *dvar* Torah was adapted from the *hashkafa* portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion. Good Shabbos!

The end of *parshas Tazria* deals with *Tza'ra'as* [the spiritual blemish often (mis)translated as leprosy] that appears on clothing. The *pasuk* [verse] says, "The kohen will see the garment after it was washed, [*vhenay lo hofach hanega es ayno*] and he sees that the *nega* [blemish] has not changed, the garment is unclean, you should burn it in fire."

The *pasuk* uses interesting language: "*vhenay lo hofach hanega es ayno*," which means that the appearance of the *nega* has not changed. This is actually an idiomatic expression. The word "*ayno*" literally means "eye," and the expression literally means, "The blemish has not changed its eye."

I saw a beautiful insight, quoted in the name of the Chidushai HaRim. The *Gemara* in *Meseches Ayrachin* says that a number of *avayros* [sins] can cause *tza'aras*. The most commonly known *avayrah* is *loshon horah* [evil tongue; slander]. However, the *Talmud* in *Meseches Ayrachin* also says that the punishment of *tza'aras* comes "*al tzoras ho'ayin*." *Tzoras ho'ayin* [literally – narrowness of eye] does not only mean a person who is tight-fisted or cheap. A *tzar ayin* is a person who never sees the good side of anything and always sees evil. It is the opposite of a generosity of spirit. It is a stinginess, regarding not only money, but regarding viewing life, in general. A *tzar ayin* is a person who does not like to see other people's success. The only success that he is interested in is his own success.

If *tzoras ho'ayin* causes *tza'ra'as*, then the *tikun* [correction] that causes the *tza'ra'as* to go away, is the person doing *teshuva* [repenting] and switching from being a *tzar ayin* to a *tov ayin*. That means that one who is like a student of *Bilom HaRoshoh*, who Chazal say had this trait of *tzoras ho'ayin*, of stinginess of spirit, must change to become from the students of *Avrohom Avinu* – to become a *tov ayin* [one with a good eye]. If the *tza'ra'as* stays the same and does not get better, the garment is unclean and the person does not have a *tikun* for his *avayrah*.

The *Chidushai HaRim* says that there is a double meaning when the *pasuk* says, "*vhenay lo hofach hanega es ayno*" – "and behold, the *tza'ra'as* did not change its appearance." "*Lo hofach hanega es ayno*" – His *ayin* [eye] did not change. In order to do *teshuva*, this person's *ayin* must change. He must change from being a *tzar ayin* to being a *tov ayin*. The *pasuk* is hinting to us, "*Vhenay lo hofach hanega es ayno*." His *ayin* did not change. He has the same stinginess, the same unwillingness to

share and be generous.

"Ayno," here, does not merely mean that the appearance did not change, but the *ayin* did not change. The *tzoras ayin*, the *avayrah* that brought on this terrible punishment, is still in place.

The *Chidushai HaRim* continues with a classic *chasidishe vort*: The word "*nega*" is really the same word as the word "*oneg*." What is the entire difference between the word "*oneg*" – pleasure and the word *nega* [in the Hebrew lettering]?

The only difference is the placement of the [letter] "*ayin*." The "*nun*" and the "*gimel*" are in the same places. The only difference is whether the "*ayin*" is at the beginning or at the end. What is the difference between "*nega*" and "*oneg*?" What is the difference between a person having *tza'ra'as* and a person having pleasure? It all depends on the placement of the "*ayin*." That is this person's problem. The problem is with the "*ayin*." His problem is with his perspective and his approach to life. His problem is with his *ayin*, so his *tikun* must be "*hofach hanega es ayno*." He must change his "*ayin*." He must take the "*ayin*" from the word "*nega*" and make it into "*oneg*."

However, if someone is so stingy of spirit that he cannot be gracious and he cannot see the good side of life, then he remains a *metzora* and "*henay lo hofach hanega es ayno*" – the *nega* remains and he must burn the garment because he is incapable of changing his "*ayin*." He is incapable of changing his perspective.

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