



PURSUE PEACE

Erev Shabbos Parashas Tazria-Metzora, Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5783

Dear Parents,

The second *pasuk* of *Parashas Metzora* tells us that one afflicted with *Tzora'as* (a form of spiritual leprosy), on the day of purification from his affliction ... *והוּבֵא אֶל הַכֹּהֵן* - *and he is brought to the Kohein*. The *Kli Yakar* points out that the expression "*and he is brought*" implies it is against the *Metzora* (the person afflicted)'s will. What does that come to teach us?

"...the Metzora is ... in need of healing ... and the only one who can provide that relief is the Kohein."

The *Kli Yakar* goes on to explain that the *Metzora* is now in need of healing from his affliction and the only one who can provide that relief is the *Kohein*. Why is the *Metzora* being forced into this dependency on the *Kohein*?

To begin with, the *Kli Yakar* explains that the *Metzora* is in his present predicament because he is guilty of hurtful behavior towards others in the form of *Loshon Hara* and other damaging speech. In fact, the term *Metzora* is tied to *Motzi Ra* – this person brought forth bad - he revealed his concealed wicked thoughts to the outside, to the community.

Furthermore, the *Metzora* is afflicted because he needs to learn *Mussar* in order to improve his ways and perforce it must be from the *Kohein*. Why the *Kohein*? The poor behavior and resultant *Tzora'as* is on account of the person not listening to the words of the *Kohein* in the first place. He did not voluntarily seek out the teachings of the *Kohein* when he had the chance. What are those specific teachings? ... *וְלֵהֵיוֹת מִתְלַמְּדֵי שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן אוֹהֵב שְׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שְׁלוֹם* *To be among the disciples of Aharon – to love peace and pursue peace*. Instead, this *Metzora* sowed discord among his neighbors and friends, the very antithesis of the teachings of *Aharon* and all subsequent *Kohanim*. Since he didn't seek out the *Kohein* as to how to improve his ways when he was healthy, he is now forced to rely upon the *Kohein* to teach him how to do *Teshuva*.

"He did not voluntarily seek out the teachings of the Kohein when he had the chance."

Aharon's pursuit of peace was an outcome of his love for every Jew. We are told in *Pirkei Avos* (1:12) *Hillel* teaches that we are all obligated to be from the disciples of *Aharon* – to love peace and pursue peace; love people and bring them close to Torah. *Rabbeinu Yonah* in his commentary on *Pirkei Avos* questions the dual instruction of both loving and pursuing peace. Isn't it enough to love peace? What is added by *pursue peace*? *Rabbeinu Yonah* explains that many people love

peace in their heart, but it is only when they take the trouble to actively work on promoting peace among friends to act accordingly by being a loving and peaceful person, can they rightfully claim to be among the students of *Aharon*.

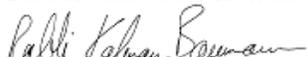
Many of our children struggle with social issues, which is normal for their age. There is pettiness, nastiness and meanness that all children have to contend with – either as victims, perpetrators or most commonly – as both. How meaningful it would be to impart these lessons of working for peace to our children. A truly upstanding Jew is one who follows in the footsteps of the great *Aharon HaKohein* whose entire being was focused on promoting peace and friendship.

When children are made to feel needed and important, they inevitably rise to the occasion. They are never too young to be ambassadors of peace among their peers. Creating a peaceful environment and healthy social circle is something that every child can contribute to. They can look out for a classmate who looks down, and they can encourage their close friends ('besties') to include all their friends in a game, conversation or activity. Parents and teachers need to stress peace and sensitivity to others' feelings among friends and classmates as a goal that we can all strive for together.

"How meaningful it would be to impart these lessons of working for peace to our children."

When adults set an example for how to have positive relationships in the family, neighborhood and community, and children hear that creating and maintaining peace and cordiality among all their peers is an important and attainable goal, we will be implanting within them a fundamental and indispensable tool for a happy and successful life.

Best wishes for a wonderful *Shabbos* and *Rosh Chodesh* of peace and caring,


Rabbi Kalman Baumann
Principal