

**Metzora - Houses in Eretz Yisroel,
A Direct Gift From Hashem Like the Bais Hamikdash
by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh**

In Vayikra 14:33-57, we read about the plague of Tzaraas and its laws involving houses. As is the case with the rest of the laws of Tzaraas, these laws only apply in Eretz Yisroel. Yet, why does the Torah specifically state in this section about Tzaraas of houses that it applies in the land that Hashem will give you for an inheritance? The Kli Yakar asks this question and brings Rashi's comment that this Tzaraas of the house will cause the house to be thrown down and reveal that the Canaanites hid in their walls. The Kli Yakar feels that all of this requires clarification.

The Kli Yakar explains that the primary cause of the plague of Tzaraas to come upon the house is stinginess. One who does not feel that he wants to share with others what Hashem has given him is punished *midah Keneged midah*, measure for measure. The owner claimed that he had nothing to give. So when the plague strikes that house and requires it to be emptied and thrown down, his 'nothing' in possessions is revealed for everyone to see as part of the procedure is emptying the house of its belongings. Indeed, we must always realize that all we have in material possessions is not truly his/her own but only a loan from Hashem. Or in other words, everything we have is really a gift from Hashem's table. This idea is even truer in Eretz Yisroel, where we have to constantly realize that Hashem gave it to us. There is no room for feeling that one inherited Eretz Yisroel by his/her own virtues. So the Torah specially stresses at the plague of Tzaraas of houses that Hashem gave us Eretz Yisroel as well as the house of each individual, that Hashem gave us the gift of the land. The lesson had to be taught that a house in Eretz Yisroel is to be earned by merit and not simply handed over. This person, sadly, had to experience having his house demolished even though the jewels that the Canaanites had hidden were found in the end.

The Kli Yakar then brings that the Canaanites built their houses for idolatry. This was a different reason for Hashem bringing the plagues to the houses to throw them down. The Kli Yakar supports this idea with the fact that our Bais Hamikdash was destroyed because of idolatry. We can understand this further from the statement the owner is supposed to say to the Kohen who comes to declare the house pure or impure, "it appears like a plague in the house." Rashi explains this unusual phraseology to mean that since only the Kohen can declare the house pure or impure, as according to the Torah's rule, the owner cannot make a definitive

statement as to whether or not there is an actual plague. He is only supposed to alert the Kohen to the issue and say there appears to be a plague and the Kohen will render the decision. The Kli Yakar understands the phraseology slightly differently. 'Like a plague,' according to Kli Yakar means the known plague of idolatry. The house having an idolatrous history had to be destroyed. A person who is an *eved Hashem* could not live in a house that is even tainted with idolatry

Some Meforshim, however, understand this section as a reference to the destruction and rebuilding of the Bais Hamikdash. In verse 42, we read that they will take other stones and put them in place of those stones. Though the old stones are scattered throughout the world and are part of the foundations of our shuls and batei midrashim, as Chazal tell us, nevertheless, new stones will be brought. Hakadosh Baruch Hu Will bring new stones, replacing the old stones, and build for us an all new Bais Hamikdash that will remain with us eternally and never be destroyed. May we all live to see this speedily in our day. Amen