

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Tazria

Siman #235

The reason why they sit on the male for forty days	טעם למה יושבים על הזכר ארבעים יום
is because man encompasses the entire Torah,	כי האדם כולל כל התורה
and the Torah was given over forty days.	והתורה נתנה בארבעים יום

[NOTE: 📖 Summary:

This teaching explains why, according to Jewish tradition, the period of forty days is significant in relation to a male child. Man (אדם) is seen as a microcosm of the entire Torah. Just as the Torah was given over a period of forty days (when Moshe ascended Mount Sinai), the process of forming and spiritually refining a newborn child parallels this timeframe. The number forty thus symbolizes a full process of internalization and connection to divine wisdom.

🔧 Practical Takeaway:

Whenever you encounter a period of "forty" — whether in Torah learning, personal growth, or life transitions — understand it as a time of deep formation and preparation. Forty represents a complete spiritual cycle. Just as a baby needs these forty days to establish a spiritual connection, and Moshe needed forty days to receive the Torah, any transformation you wish to achieve requires time, patience, and consistency. Don't rush the process; embrace the journey.

📖 True Chassidic Story:

The Tzemach Tzedek (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch) once commented on the power of "forty days" in personal development. A young man came to him troubled, saying he wanted to change but kept falling into old habits. The Tzemach Tzedek advised him: *"Dedicate forty consecutive days to intense focus on one mitzvah or one area of improvement. Don't miss a single day. Even if you don't feel a difference at first, you are reshaping your soul the same way rain reshapes the earth slowly but surely."*

The young man followed his advice and later testified that this forty-day discipline permanently changed his connection to Torah and mitzvos.

Forty days of effort draws down a new spiritual structure into a person's life — just as the Torah itself was drawn down through forty days of Moshe's ascent. **END NOTE]**

Siman #236

In the name of the Rabbi of blessed memory, the skin of man surrounds the man, and similarly, the words of man are his surrounds.	בשם הרב ז"ל, עור האדם הוא מקיף את האדם, וכן הדבורים של האדם הם המקיפין שלו.
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And therefore a metzora, who damaged with the speech of lashon hara, a mark of a plague appears on the skin of the flesh, for the skin is that which surrounds the body.	וְלֹכֶן מְצֹרָע שֶׁפָּגַם בְּדִבּוּר לְשׁוֹן הָרַע נַעֲשֶׂה רֶשֶׁם נֶגַע בְּעוֹר הַבָּשָׂר, שֶׁהָעוֹר הוּא הַמְקִיף עַל הַגּוּף.
And if he did not repent, the mark comes out onto his garment — his cloak — which surrounds his body.	וְאִם לֹא תָזַר בּוֹ יוֹצֵא הָרֶשֶׁם בְּבִגְדוֹ קִלּוֹ שֶׁהוּא מְקִיף עַל גּוּפוֹ.
If he did not repent, it comes out onto the wall of his house, which is the outer surrounding.	לֹא תָזַר בּוֹ יוֹצֵא בִּכְתֵל הַבַּיִת שֶׁהוּא הַמְקִיף הַחִיצוֹן.
And therefore the passages were written in the Torah in this order, one after the other, for the garments are surrounds and protection for man, and likewise the house is protection.	וְלֹכֶן נִכְתְּבוּ הַפָּרָשִׁיּוֹת בַּתּוֹרָה כְּסֹדֶר זֶה אַחֵר זֶה, כִּי הַבְּגָדִים הֵם מְקִיפִין וְשִׁמְרָה לְאָדָם, וְכֵן הַבַּיִת הוּא שִׁמְרָה.
Therefore a sick person removes his garments, because his surrounds have gone, and he is unable to tolerate the surrounds.	לֹכֶן חוֹלֵה מְסִיר הַבְּגָדִים, כִּי הִלְכוּ הַמְקִיפִין שְׁלוֹ וְאִינוֹ יָכוֹל לְסָבּוֹל הַמְקִיפִין.
And therefore a person walking at night who is afraid cries out and speaks to himself, for speech is a surround and protection.	וְלֹכֶן אָדָם הַחֹלֵף בַּלַּיְלָה וּמִתְנַרֵּא צוֹעֵק וּמְדַבֵּר אֶל עַצְמוֹ, כִּי הַדִּבּוּר הוּא מְקִיף וְהוּא שִׁמְרָה.
And therefore a sick person cries out in his illness and groans to bring himself surrounds.	וְלֹכֶן חוֹלֵה צוֹעֵק בַּחֲלָיו וְנֹאֲנַח לְהֵבִיא לְעַצְמוֹ מְקִיפִין.
And therefore a child, who does not yet have so many surrounds, requires protection.	וְלֹכֶן תִּינוּק שֶׁאֵין לוֹ מְקִיפִין כָּל כָּד, צָרִיךְ שִׁמְרָה.
And therefore it is written regarding Chananya, Mishael, and Azaryah that they were bound in their cloaks (Daniel 3:21), because they had surrounds, and therefore they were saved.	וְלֹכֶן כְּתִיב בְּחֻמְשָׁא מִשְׁאֵל וְעַזְרִיָּה כְּפִיתוּ בְּסָרְבָלֵיהֶן (דָּנִיֵּאל ג', כ"א), שֶׁהָיָה לָהֶם מְקִיפִין, לֹכֶן נִצְלוּ.
Therefore, Yisrael in the desert had surrounds after the giving of the Torah; therefore, your garments did not wear out (Devarim 8:4), because they received the Torah.	לֹכֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּמִּדְבָּר הָיָה לָהֶם מְקִיפִין אַחֵר מִתֵּן תּוֹרָה, לֹכֶן שִׁמְרָתָם לֹא בָלְתָה (דְּבָרִים ח', ד'). מִחֻמַּת שִׁמְרָתָם הַתּוֹרָה.
And therefore the Gemara (Berachos 6b) asks: "These garments of the Rabbis, why do they wear out?" Since they have good speech, how did they wear out? And it needed to answer, etc.	וְלֹכֶן מְקַשֵּׁי הַגְּמָרָא (בְּרַחוֹת ו', ב') הֵגִי מְאִנֵּי דְרַבָּנָן דְּבָלִי, כִּינּוּן שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָהֶם דְּבוּרִים טוֹבִים אִידָּךְ בָּלוּ, וְהוֹצִרָה לְתַרְצֵן וְכו'.
And therefore the reward of a house of a wedding celebration is words (Berachos 6b), because at a new marriage there are accusations above, and therefore words are needed to be surrounds and protection.	וְלֹכֶן אֲגָרָא דְּבֵי הַלּוּלָא מִלֵּי (בְּרַחוֹת ו', ב'), מִחֻמַּת כִּי בְּזוּיג תְּדֹשׁ יֵשׁ קְטְרוּגִים לְמַעַלָּה, צָרִיךְ דְּבוּרִים לְהִיּוֹת לָהֶם מְקִיפִין וְשִׁמְרָה.
And therefore that child in Parshas Balak (Zohar 3:186b) sensed in the smell of their garments that they had not recited Krias Shema, because they had damaged their speech, and there was an indication in their garments which are also surrounds.	וְלֹכֶן הִרְגִּישׁ הָאִי יְנוּקָא בְּפָרָשַׁת בָּלָק (זֹהַר ח"ג קפ"ו, ב') בְּרִיחָא דְּלְבוּשֵׁיהוּ שֶׁלֹּא קָרְאוּ קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, שֶׁפָּגַמוּ בְּדִבּוּר וְהָיָה הַכֹּר בַּמְּלָבוּשִׁים שֶׁהֵם גַּם כֵּן מְקִיפִין.

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And therefore when a person tears his garment slightly due to an accident — he must be cautious with himself, for surely he damaged in his speech, etc.

וְלָכֵן כְּשֶׁאָדָם קוֹרֵעַ מִלְּבוּשׁוֹ קֶצֶת בְּאוֹנָם — יֵשׁ לוֹ
'לְהִשָּׁגִיחַ עַל עֲצָמוֹ, כִּי בְּדָאִי פָגַם בְּדַבּוּר וְכוּ

[NOTE: Summary:

This teaching explains a profound mystical idea:

- **Man's skin** represents a *spiritual surround* (מקיף), just as **speech** forms a protective surround around a person.
- When a person **speaks lashon hara** (evil speech), it damages his spiritual surrounds:
 - First, it creates a blemish on his **skin**.
 - If he does not repent, the blemish appears on his **garments**, which surround him externally.
 - If he still does not repent, the blemish manifests in the **walls of his house**, his outermost surround.
- This is why the Torah orders the laws of tzaraas (plague) in sequence: first the skin, then the clothing, then the house.
- A sick person, who loses his strength, often removes his clothes because he loses the ability to tolerate spiritual surrounds.
- Speaking to oneself during fear (e.g., when walking at night) is actually a way to create protective spiritual surrounds through speech.
- Similarly, a child, who naturally has fewer surrounds, needs greater protection.
- In the story of Chananya, Mishael, and Azaryah, their survival in the fiery furnace was attributed to their strong spiritual surrounds ("בְּסִרְכָּלֵיהוֹן" – their cloaks).
- In the desert, the Jewish people's clothes didn't wear out because the giving of the Torah gave them powerful spiritual surrounds.
- When a person tears his clothing even slightly (even by accident), it is a sign to examine if he has spiritually damaged himself through improper speech.

Thus, **speech is not just communication** — it is a real spiritual *shield* around a person.

Practical Takeaway:

- **Speak carefully.** Every word you say either strengthens or weakens your spiritual armor.
- **Use your words to protect yourself.** Torah learning, prayer, blessing others — all of these build strong spiritual surrounds.
- **Be alert to physical hints.** A sudden tearing of clothing, fear at night, unexplained feelings of vulnerability — these could hint at a need to strengthen your speech and inner world.

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- **Guard children.** Since they have fewer natural surrounds, we must watch over them carefully and fill their environment with holy speech.

In short:

Speech is your invisible clothing. Dress yourself daily with pure, good, and holy words.

True Chassidic Story:

The Alter Rebbe's Garment

It is told that once, the **Alter Rebbe** (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi) wore an old and worn-out garment despite having access to fine clothing. When a Chassid asked him why he didn't replace it, the Rebbe explained:

"A physical garment can cover the body, but a spiritual garment, woven from holy words and thoughts, clothes the soul. As long as my soul's garment shines, what difference is the garment of the body?"

Later, when the Alter Rebbe was imprisoned in Petersburg, the Russian officers saw his great dignity despite his simple clothes. They asked him, "Where is your crown?"

He answered, "My crown is within — fashioned from Torah and fear of Heaven."

This story reflects the teaching above: the **true protection** and **true clothing** of a person is **his words, his thoughts, and his connection to holiness** — not just external garments. **END**

NOTE]

Siman #237	
Plagues of houses.	נִגְעֵי בָתִּים
That is, because there are “novlot” (fallen remnants) etc.,	אֵינָנוּ כִּי יֵשׁ נִבְלֹת וְכוּ
and this is [the meaning of] “Ben Yair for your donkeys” (Ketos “Lyon Kami” for nine kals),	(וְזֶה בְּכוֹן יָאִיר לְחֻמוֹרֶיךָ (קִינִס "לִיוֹן קָמִי" לְתַשְׁעָה כָּלֶךְ)
and they were so fallen that they became inanimate on the level of vegetative,	וְהָיוּ כָּל כֶּף נִבְלֹת עַד שֶׁנֶּעֱשְׂהָ דוֹמָם בְּבְחִינַת צוּמָח
and if it spreads, it will completely spread,	וְאִם פָּשָׁה תִפְשָׁה
and converts.	וְגָרִי

[NOTE: 📖 Summary:

This verse is stated regarding plagues of a person (Vayikra 13:7) and not about inanimate objects, and perhaps there is a scribal error and it should say: "And behold the plague has spread," which is said regarding plagues of houses (Vayikra 14:38).

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And see *Likkutei Torah* by the Baal HaTanya (Parshas Tazria, p. 22b):

“A man, when he shall have in the skin of his flesh...” — Man is on a high level, for he is the completeness of all [creations]. Nevertheless, he can still have, in the skin of his flesh, in his lower aspect, unrefined evil and dross that have not been clarified from him.

And signs appear physically in his flesh unnaturally — these are the plagues, which are not ordinary skin afflictions.

As the Rambam wrote, the mitzvah of diagnosing plagues is not practiced in our time after the destruction [of the Temple], because it is no longer found that there would be a change in the flesh itself without any moisture, since such an occurrence would only be through miracles.

Because spiritually, in divine service, a person corrects his deeds and clarifies the evil from the good in all things, but the residue that remains in the outer garments is still not clarified; therefore, it appears in his flesh.

Moreover, plagues are lofty matters — one is not deemed impure until the Kohen pronounces him impure; and if he has not yet called him impure, the plagues are not categorized as impurity. On the contrary, they are lofty lights, only they are a hard judgment of holiness, as explained in *Etz Chaim*.

(And see *Ramez* at the end of Parshas Tazria where he discusses this, and understand this great matter: that the impurity of tzaraas is not like other impurities, etc.)

Therefore, plagues are not practiced in our time — meaning, they are not found among people, because they indicated a clarification of evil from the **inner** dimension of the body and soul, whereas today, even the righteous and the good still have some residual evil internally.

And this is sufficient for the understanding. End of quote.

This teaching discusses the idea of **נגעי בתים** — the "plagues of houses" mentioned in the Torah. Spiritually, it refers to a degradation where holy potential (symbolized by "novlot" — fallen remnants) falls so low that it becomes like the **inanimate** (דומם), specifically the level of **vegetative life** (צומח).

The phrase "Ben Yair for your donkeys" from obscure Midrashic or Talmudic references (likely based on a play on names in a kinus or poetic lamentation) hints that even something meant to bring light (Ben Yair — "son of illumination") can descend to such lowly purposes — like servicing donkeys (the symbol of materialism).

If this descent (פשה) continues unchecked, it can spread and solidify — affecting everything until it requires total rectification.

Even so, the text hints at redemption through "גֵּרִי" (converts) — suggesting that even the lowest places can be uplifted and returned to holiness.

Practical Takeaway:

If left unattended, small spiritual declines (novlot — little "fallings") can harden into serious blockages — from sensitive spiritual consciousness down to total spiritual dullness (inanimate).

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The lesson is: **Don't ignore small spiritual slips.**

Act early when you notice cooling off in your passion for Torah, prayer, or mitzvos. A small crack becomes a wide chasm if left unrepaired.

At the same time, no matter how low a person or a home has fallen, the power of transformation ("converts" — גרי) shows that everything can be repaired and elevated through teshuvah and effort.

True Chassidic Story:

The **Baal Shem Tov** once stayed in a small village where he was invited to bless a rich man's newly built house. When the Baal Shem Tov arrived, he strangely refused to enter.

He said, "There is blood between the walls."

Upon investigation, they found that the bricks had been made by oppressed laborers who had been mistreated and underpaid.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that **when impurity attaches itself to the very foundation of a house**, it becomes spiritually "plagued," much like נגעי בתים.

But he also taught that sincere repentance and acts of charity could "redeem" the fallen sparks hidden even in such a house — **transforming it from a place of curse into a vessel for blessing. END NOTE]**