

# *An Over-Inflated Ego Can Pop*

PARSHA INSIGHTS - TAZRIA (5760)

## ARROGANCE LEADS TO COLLAPSE

In the past, we spoke about the causes for the supernatural ailment known as *tzoraas* [a leprous-like affliction]. Please review the *d'var Torah* [lesson] of *Tazria* 5758, based on the *Gemara Erchin* 16B, for an analysis of this topic.

☞ Copies of the essay are available online at TorahMax.com under: “Sefer Vayikra”, “Parshas Tazria” and “Parshas Metzora”, “[It's Caused by Seven Sins](#)” - R. Moshe Heigh.

Today we will focus on one of the sins which precipitates *tzoraas*, the trait of haughtiness.

“This is the law for every *tzoraas* affliction... and of the *s'ais*, of the *sapachas*, and of the *baheres*...” (14:54-56). You might already know that *S' AIS* and *SAPACHAS* are two types of *tzoraas*. We explained in 5758 that *S' AIS* is a swelling or sore whose color resembles that of clean wool of a young lamb. *SAPACHAS* is a subcategory of *S' AIS*, or a subcategory of the third type listed in our *pasuk* [verse], *baheres*. *Baheres* is an acute case of *tzoraas*— a very bright spot, white as snow. The *Gemara* we are about to study explores a hidden meaning in two of these words, *S' AIS* and *SAPACHAS*, and a significant lesson is derived.

In *Sota* 4B through 5B, there is a lengthy discussion about the negative characteristic known as “*gasus haruach*” [false pride]. At the bottom of 5A, the sages cite the above-mentioned *pasuk* as a warning against arrogance. This is how they expound the verse. Rav Ashi said that anyone who is conceited will ultimately be diminished. *Rashi* explains: He will be brought down from his noble position, and his status will be that of a lowly individual. How is this proven?

Our *pasuk*, in summarizing the laws of *tzoraas* and its treatment, lists “the *s'ais*” and “the *sapachas*”. “*S'ais*”, although it is simply a type of *tzoraas*, also hints to something else. It is a term of haughtiness, as proven in the *Gemara*. Additionally, “*sapachas*” indicates the opposite— inferiority, something minor and secondary. True, it is a form of *tzoraas*, but its more profound interpretation has to do with triviality.

Thus, the *Gemara* asserts that conceitedness leads to inferiority. One whose ego is over-inflated might eventually bring himself to the other extreme. “*S'ais*”, arrogance, prefaces “*sapachas*”, decline and defeat. The lesson is that haughtiness brings about the diminishing of one’s lofty status.

The *Maharsha* points out, based on the *Gemara Erchin* 16 we studied in 5758, that one of the transgressions which causes *tzoraas* is false pride. This is the underlying reason for the *Gemara Sota*’s statement. Arrogance leads to downfall, and this very lesson is contained in the words which signify two species of *tzoraas*, *S' AIS* and *SAPACHAS*.

This *Gemara Sota* is full of detailed illustrations and elaborate proofs concerning the destructive nature of false pride. With the proper measure and applications of the noble quality of humility, we will certainly enhance the quality of life for our families and communities.

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