

## Leviticus 13:3 – 5

וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר־הַבָּשָׂר וְשַׁעַר בַּנֶּגַע הָפֶה | לָבֵן וּמֵרָאָה הַנֶּגַע עֲמֹק מִעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ נִגַע צֹרֶעַת הוּא  
וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְטָמֵא אֹתוֹ:

The priest shall examine the affection on the skin of his body: if hair in the affected patch has turned white and the affection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous affection; *when the priest sees it*, he shall pronounce him unclean.

וְאִם־בִּהְרֹתָ לְבָנָה הוּא בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ וְעֲמֹק אֵין־מֵרָאָה מִן־הָעוֹר וְשַׁעֲרָה לֹא־הָפֶה לָבֵן וְהַסִּגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע  
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:

But if it is a white discoloration on the skin of his body which does not appear to be deeper than the skin and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest shall isolate the affected person for seven days.

וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהָנָה הַנֶּגַע עָמַד בְּעֵינָיו לֹא־פָשָׁה הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְהַסִּגִּירוֹ הַכֹּהֵן שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שְׁנִית:

On the seventh day the priest shall examine him, and if the affection has remained unchanged in color and the disease has not spread on the skin, the priest shall isolate him for another seven days.

## Leviticus 19:14

לֹא־תִקְלָל חֵרֶשׁ וְלִפְנֵי עוֹר לֹא תִתֵּן מִכְשָׁל וְיִרְאָתָּ מַאֲלֵהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am the Eternal.

## R. Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, HaEmek HaDavar on Leviticus 19:14

הוא ג"כ ענין לשמירת שלום וחשיבות בני אדם זה לזה כמש"כ דכמו שהאדם מחשיב את חבירו, כך חבירו מחשיב אותו. ותניא בת"כ פ' זו פ"ד הי"ב ב"ע אומר זה ספר תולדות אדם זה כלל גדול בתורה. ופי' הראב"ד היינו סיפא דקרא בדמות אלהים עשה אותו את מי אתה מבזה את מי אתה מקלל דיוקנו של מקום ב"ה. ומי שאינו חושב כזה הוא בתואר מי שאין עליו צלם אלהים

This [mitzvah not to curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind] is also part of the concept of maintaining harmony and the dignity of human beings one to another...

and it is written in the beraita... **"This is the book of the generations of mankind"** (Bereishit 5:1)

Ben Azai states: This a major principle of the Torah.

And the Raavad explains that he is referring to the end of the verse **"[humankind] who was made in the image of God"**- whom are you degrading? [when you shame another human being], whom are you cursing? [when you curse another human being]? The image of the Holy One Blessed be God"

And someone who does not think this way is labelled as if the divine image is not resting upon him!"

## Pirkei Avot 4:27

רבי יוסי בר יהודה איש כפר הבבלי אומר, הלומד מן הקטנים למה הוא דומה, לאכל ענבים קהות ושותה יין מגתו. והלומד מן הזקנים למה הוא דומה, לאכל ענבים בשלות ושותה יין ישן. רבי אומר, אל תסתפל בקנקן, אלא במה שיש בו. יש קנקן חדש מלא ישן, וישן שאפלו חדש אין בו:

Rabbi Yossei the son of Judah of Kfar HaBavli would say: One who learns Torah from youngsters, whom is he comparable to?

To one who eats unripe grapes and drinks [unfermented] wine from the press.

One who learns Torah from the old, whom is he comparable to? To one who eats ripened grapes and drinks aged wine.

Said Rabbi Meir: Look not at the vessel, but at what it contains. There are new vessels that are filled with old wine, and old vessels that do not even contain new wine.

## Mishneh Torah

הַרְוֹאֶה אֶת הַכּוֹשִׁי וְאֶת הַמְשָׁנִין בְּצוּרַת פְּנֵיהֶן אוֹ בְּאַיְבֵרֵיהֶם מְבָרֵךְ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם מְשֻׁנָּה אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת. הַרְוֹאֶה סוּמָא אוֹ קֹטֵעַ וּמְכָה שְׁחִין וּבֹהֶקֶנִין וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן מְבָרֵךְ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם דֵּין הָאֱמֶת. וְאִם נוֹלְדוּ כֵּן מִמַּעַי אִמֵּן מְבָרֵךְ מְשֻׁנָּה אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת.

One who sees a Cushite, or anyone unusual in facial appearance or conformation of his limbs, says, "Blessed are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the Universe, Who makes people different."

On seeing a person who is blind or lame, or one afflicted with boils or sores, etc. the blessing said is "Blessed are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the Universe, the true Judge."

If the affliction is congenital, the blessing is "Who makes people different."

### Edward M. Friedman, "Individuals with Disabilities" in *The Observant Life*.

"This might sound slightly pejorative, but can also be interpreted as an acknowledgement that what appears at first as a disability can also be seen as a sort of blessing, as it may provide those who have a nominal disability with insight and skill levels that they might otherwise never have attained.

According to the *midrash* preserved in *Midrash T'hilim* 34:1, for example, David who initially questioned the purpose of madness in the world, ultimately prays to God to grant him at least the appearance of madness in order to save his life from a hostile Philistine king. Thus we are taught that all sorts of disabilities exist in the world, physical and psychological, and they all provide us with opportunities to look for God and experience divine reality in unexpected ways."