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Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Tazria-Metzora

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Yearning for Tzaraat

Rabbi Ezra Goldschmiedt

Tzaraat, often misleadingly translated as leprosy, is spiritual rather than physical. Despite its physical manifestation, tzaraat demonstrates that something is wrong with an individual on the level of his morals and thought processes. (See Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's commentary, end of Parshat Tazria.) Through Miriam's contraction of this disease as a consequence of her slander of Moshe (see Bamidbar 12), as well as our charge to remember this episode while being "careful of the tzaraat disease" (Devarim 24:8-9), we are shown that tzaraat is especially a message for the speaker of lashon hara, evil talk.

Less known however, is that a number of other behaviours are also listed among the causes for tzaraat. Vayikra Rabbah (Metzora 16:1) tells us that a few verses from Mishlei (6:16-19) provide us with the comprehensive list: "Hashem hates these six, and even the seventh is repellent to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that spill innocent blood, a heart plotting violence, feet that are quick to run to evil, a false witness spreading lies, and one who incites conflict between brothers." Mishlei's words, as interpreted by Chazal, are particularly telling.

Applying tzaraat to this group teaches us that at its core, the disease is meant

to address not only lashon hara, but a range of sins committed in the social sphere (although, to be sure, lashon hara seems to receive special treatment). Wrongdoings which are beyond the purview of an earthly court, or, at the very least, are crimes which man can all too easily get away with, are the subject of this unique form of judgement. With these parameters in mind, the phenomenon of tzaraat teaches us a lesson central to the Torah's instruction: In no uncertain terms, G-d wants us to know his hatred of these behaviours. He is even willing to go beyond the natural order to do so. (See Ramban to 13:47.) When our actions are not a direct affront to G-d, and particularly when we seem to face no consequences from our fellow man, it is all too easy to think that we are still on good terms with our Creator. Whether through direct experience or through our learning of its various laws, tzaraat is G-d's way of telling us that such an idea is nothing but a delusion.

This concept can be gleaned from the metzora's diagnosis itself. A metzora's status is uniquely effected by the declaration of such by a kohen (and not by the development of the condition alone). The kohen, the representative of G-d, is the one who tells the metzora that with his current lifestyle, he has no place in the community. Indeed, the structure of this law is tailor-made for those under the delusion mentioned above: Those

driven to consult the spiritual leaders of their time for a "psak" concerning a matter that is ostensibly spiritual, all the while treating their fellow man without a modicum of respect. One whose sins are social in nature is exactly the type of individual who can delude himself into thinking that he nevertheless has a close relationship with G-d; he is therefore the one most in need of the wake-up call that tzaraat affords.

While the thought of suffering such a condition is frightening, one can almost appreciate living in a world where this phenomenon exists. It is indeed a sad state of affairs that in today's world, various individuals, either because of their position, or because of the nature of their wrongdoings, can torment the society they live in without consequence. A world in which G-d more openly declares the individuals He holds in contempt would be, in many ways, a welcome sight. Perhaps jarring personal messages from G-d would provide impetus for the changes that we are often reluctant to initiate.

Noting that tzaraat is not prevalent in today's world, Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai suggests (in his work Nachal Kedumim) that this is due to the absence of the Beit HaMikdash. As the disease's corrective process (which includes korbanot, with their own symbolic teachings) cannot be accomplished in its entirety, G-d has removed this method of communicating His displeasure from us. Nowadays, our moral failings can go unnoticed; even after understanding how we've strayed, we require a less direct, and likely less effective, method of repair.

While we often fail to see the value of what the geulah could mean to us, the tzaraat process – G-d's way of communicating His thoughts concerning our behaviour – is perhaps one element that we can yearn for.

egoldschmiedt@torontotorah.com

Parshah Questions

R' Meir Lipschitz

Answers to some of the questions appear on the back page

- Why did Hashem command the laws of *tzara'at* to both Moshe and Aharon? (Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and Rabbi S.R. Hirsch to Vayikra 13:1)
- Why did the laws of *tzara'at* on a house only apply once the Jews entered the Land of Israel? (Rashi, Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Netziv, Daat Mikra, R' S.R. Hirsch, to Vayikra 14:34)
- When describing the affliction which appears on his home, why must a person use the term *k'nega*, "like an affliction" and not *nega*, "an affliction"? (Rashi, Malbim, Mizrachi, Maharal, Torah Temimah, and Shaarei Aharon to Vayikra 14:35, and Tosafot Yom Tov to Mishnah Negaim 12:5)
- For children: What is the significance of each of the items a metzora brings during his purification process? (Rashi to Vayikra 14:4)

meir.lipschitz@gmail.com

Discrepancies in the Kriat haTorah Schedule

R' Dovid Zirkind

Every so often, when the last day of a Yom Tov falls out on Shabbat in Diaspora, this results in a discrepancy in Torah reading for some weeks to follow. This year, for example, the last day of Pesach in Israel was a Friday, while Yom Tov was observed through Shabbat outside of Israel. Consequently, Parshat Shemini was read a week later in the Diaspora. Rabbi Betzalel Stern discusses a number of interesting scenarios which result from this discrepancy in the Torah reading. (Teshuvot B'tzel Hachochma #2-9)

According to Rabbi Stern, Diaspora Jews visiting Israel for Pesach should ideally look for a minyan which observes the eighth day of the Yom Tov. If such a minyan is not available, Rabbi Stern argues that the visitors are obligated nonetheless in hearing the regular Shabbat reading of Parshat Shemini with the community in Israel. Whenever a Yom Tov overlaps with Shabbat, says Rabbi Stern, we adapt the five aliyot of Yom Tov to conform to the seven aliyot of Shabbat. This is because our obligation of hearing seven aliyot every Shabbat exists irrespective of a coinciding Yom Tov. Therefore, if one cannot fulfill both obligations (Shabbat and Yom Tov) through the Yom Tov reading, it is best to fulfill the regular Shabbat obligation of seven aliyot along with those not observing the Yom Tov. Conversely, one who heard Parshat Shemini in Israel and spends the next Shabbat outside of Israel (where Shemini is being read again), is likewise obligated in hearing the Torah reading for Shabbat, despite having heard that same parshah the

Shabbat before. In both cases, the visitor is permitted to receive aliyot along with the congregation.

Israelis who spend Yom Tov abroad, as well as visitors to Israel who observed the eighth day of Pesach with the Yom Tov reading, find themselves trailing the public readings in Israel. We usually assume that Torah reading is a communal obligation, so that an individual who is unable to attend on a given Shabbat is not obligated to arrange a proper Torah reading for himself. Nevertheless, in our situation, some authorities encourage those who are able to arrange an additional reading for the missed parshah to do so. Rabbi Avraham Dovid Horovitz concludes that the best option is to extend the Shabbat Minchah reading to include the entire Parshat Shemini in addition to the first aliyah of Parshat Tazria [Teshuvot Kinyan Torah L'halacha #12].

With each week's Torah reading comes an obligation to study the weekly parshah with some form of translation – *sh'nayim mikra v'echad targum*. The Gemara suggests that one who is diligent in observing this mitzvah will merit in long life (Berachot 8a). Rabbi Stern notes that this obligation may include two parshiyot for someone who intends to hear both on the same Shabbat. However, one who heard the parshah in Israel prior to going abroad is not obligated to repeat his study. *Sh'nayim mikra* only requires that a person complete the Torah once per year.

dzirkind@torontotorah.com

613 Mitzvot: #149-150

The Well-Groomed Kohen

R' Mordechai Torczyner

The male kohanim, descendants of Moshe's brother Aharon, were the people who carried out the daily service in the Beit haMikdash. We have already learned that the kohanim wear a special uniform; they also observe a code of grooming.

Mitzvah 149 requires kohanim to keep their hair to a specific length, not allowing it to grow for more than thirty days. According to the Rambam, most kohanim may grow their hair so long as they do not enter the Beit haMikdash in that state, but the kohen gadol may never keep long hair.

Mitzvah 150 adds that kohanim are not to wear torn clothing in the Beit haMikdash.

Torn clothes and long hair are traditional signs of mourning, and the Beit haMikdash is not to be associated with mourning. However, according to most authorities these prohibitions apply even when no thought of mourning is involved. [See Minchat Chinuch 150:4 for more about this.]

torczyner@torontotorah.com

Hitoriri:

Jewish Spirituality

Treasures in the Wall

R' Baruch Weintraub

בפרשת מצורע, בפתיחה לגעיה בתים, נאמר: "כי תבאו אל ארץ כנען אשר אני נתן לכם לאחזה ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחזתכם" (ויקרא יד, לד)

הגמרא בהריות, דף י"א, דורשת: "תניא, ר' יהודה אומר, בשורה היא להם שנגעים באים עליהם"

כלומר, לשון הפסוק מרמזת על כך שנגעים הבתים הינם הבטחה, ולא דווקא עונש. רש"י אצלו מסביר, שנגעים הבתים הינם בשורה, כיוון שכך נמצאו מטמוני זהב שהטמינו האמוריים. אלא שהסברו של רש"י עדיין טעון ביאור נוסף: מדוע דווקא דרך זו נבחרה לגילוי המטמוניות?

נראה, כי עניין זה יתבאר על פי שני מדרשים נוספים. בגמרא ביומא יא ע"ב נאמר: "מי שמייחד ביתו לו, שאינו רוצה להשאל כליו, ואומר שאין לו, הקדוש ברוך הוא מפרסמו, כשמפנה את ביתו [מפני נגעי בתים]". באופן דומה, הגמרא בערכין טז ע"א מביאה, כי נגעי בתים באים בשל 'צרות עין'. ייתכן, כי מדרשים אלו, המתארים את נגעי הבתים כעונש, ומדרשו של רבי יהודה, המתאר את נגעי הבתים כבשורה, אינם בהכרח סותרים זה לזה.

הכניסה לארץ ישראל, וההתיישבות בה, על אף היותן נקודת הפתיחה למימוש התורה במלואה, והקמת 'ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש', צופנות בחובן סכנה משמעותית. המעבר ממגורים באהלים במדבר, 'מצב חירום', לשלוה ובטחון של האנשים הנסגרים מאחורי קירות אבן, עלול להביא גם להסתגרות של המשפחות בתוך עצמן, ולאבדן המבנה החברתי. מצב זה, המתואר בגמרא ביומא כחוסר הסכמה להשאל כלים מזה לזה, נובע למעשה מצרות עין, כפי שמצויין בגמרא בערכין. צרות עין משמעה אי רצון לראות את התמונה הרחבה, בה אתה ושכנך הינכם חלק ממערכת אחת, מרקמה חברתית גדולה יותר.

פעמים רבות, צרות העין הופכת למעין מעגל קסמים – האדם חושש להזדהות עם שכניו, פן יאבד את זהותו העצמית. באופן זה, נבנית ייחודיות דווקא על אי שיתוף פעולה עם החברה, וממילא התנגדותו לשיתוף פעולה זה רק הולכת וגוברת.

פתרונה של התורה לבעיה זו, המוכרת לכל מי שגר פעם בעיר הגדולה, הינו ניתוח הקירות. המטמוניות יתגלו דווקא על ידי ההשתתפות בחברה. הזהות העצמית והייחודית תמצא דווקא בעזרה לזולת, בהפתחות כלפי האחר, ובגילוי כי לכל אחד מאיתנו יש מה לתת, ולקבל, מחברו. תרומה ייחודית וגם קבלה ייחודית, אשר אף אחד אחר לא יוכל לתת.

על כן, נגעי הבתים, העיפוש הנובע מהסגירות ומצרות העין, נפתרים על ידי שבירת הקירות, היציאה מן הבית, וגילוי המטמוניות שהקירות החביאו.

bweintraub@torontotorah.com

**Torah in Translation
May a Doctor
Treat Her Parent?**

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach
Minchat Shlomo 1:32
Translated by Yair Manas

[Translator's note: Shemot 21:15 says that a child who strikes a parent is liable. Mishnah Sanhedrin 11:1 elaborates that the child must draw blood to be liable.]

There is another great support to permit [treating one's parent] in the Minchat Chinuch's statement (Mitzvah 48): "The gemara asks, 'May a child let blood for a parent?' But that is when the blood-letting is *against the parent's will*. So too, the talmudic sages who did not let their children remove a splinter because perhaps the child would make a wound, were concerned that it would be against the parent's will. However, if the parent forgives his honour and commands the child to do so, then the child is not liable, and does not transgress this prohibition at all. So too, in wounding one's friend."

[In a footnote, Rabbi Auerbach adds: The Minchat Chinuch writes, "Even though I did not find this explicitly written, nonetheless logic indicates this, and in my humble opinion this is clear." Nevertheless, it has been pointed out to me that the She'iltot (end of 60) writes regarding the principle of "A father who waives his honour, his honour is waived" that this is for honour, but **not** for hitting and cursing. Haameik She'eilah [R' Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin] brings support for this, and then adds, "Really, we do not need these proofs other than to demonstrate that forgiving one's honour does not permit disgrace. For cursing or hitting, it is obvious [that the father cannot waive it]; even one who curses himself violates a prohibition." Still, it is plausible that if the father wanted the blood-letting or splinter removal, and this was his will, then it would not be within the biblical category of striking one's parent.]

In my humble opinion, there is great proof for the words of the Minchat Chinuch, since the command to not hit one's parents is derived from the same verse as the command to not hit anyone, and regarding hitting another person with that person's permission, the law is that if the friend says "Hit me on the condition that you will be exempt" then the hitter is exempt. (Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 421:12) Similarly, the Rambam writes that hitting a friend is liable only when it is "in the form of disgrace." (Hilchot Chovel U'Mazik 5:1) If so, then the same rule should apply when one

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Porush was the founder of the Shaarei Chessed neighbourhood of Jerusalem; his son, Rabbi Chaim Yehudah Leib Auerbach, founded and served as Rosh Yeshiva of the Shaar haShomayim Yeshiva, dedicated to study of Kabbalah. Rabbi Chaim Leib's son, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach – commonly known as just "Rav Shlomo Zalman" – was the first child born in Shaarei Chessed, in 1910.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was known for his diligent Torah study. When he was about eleven years old, the first automobile arrived in his neighbourhood. While all of the other schoolchildren ran out of the classroom to see the car, Rav Shlomo Zalman remained in his seat, absorbed in his studies. (*And From Jerusalem, His Word* by Rabbi Chanoch Teller, pg. 69)

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was also known for his refined character. Even in his older years he would rise to provide women with a seat on a bus, and he was careful to respect the dignity of all human beings.

While in Yeshiva, Rav Shlomo Zalman became a top student of Rav Issur Zalman Meltzer, and he later learned in the kollel of Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank. At the age of 24, Rav Shlomo Zalman published a sefer discussing halachic issues in the use of electricity. This text received approbation from Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, a leading sage of the time. Rav Shlomo Zalman is also well-known for his rulings on medical halacha, and for his rulings on the laws of Shabbat. These rulings were published by Rabbi Yehoshua Neuwirth in *Shemirat Shabbat K'Hilchatah*, and by Rabbi Dr. Abraham S. Abraham in *Nishmat Avraham*.

Many of Rav Shlomo Zalman's sons serve as Rabbis in Israel, and his daughter Rachel is married to Rabbi Zalman Nechemiah Goldberg, a leading halachic authority in Israel. It is estimated that 300,000 people attended Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's funeral in 1995; aish.com labels it "the largest funeral in Israel since mishnaic times."

ymanas@torontotorah.com

wounds his parents medically, even unnecessarily, and the child receives permission even for mistakes. We need not worry about a mistake...

Although all other halachic authorities did not distinguish between wounding a parent with and without permission, the distinction is logical, and we can attach this rationale [to other rationales] to allow [a child to treat his parent].

**Ha'Aretz
Har Herzl הר הרצל
R' Mordechai Torczyner**

Har Herzl (Mount Herzl) is a mountain in the Jerusalem Forest in the western part of Jerusalem, between the neighbourhoods of Ein Kerem, Beit haKerem, Bayit v'Gan and Yefeh Nof. It rises more than 800 metres above sea level, and has been home to the graves of the modern State of Israel's leaders since August 17, 1949, when Theodor Herzl's remains were re-interred there from Vienna. This fulfilled Herzl's dying wish, as recorded in his will, "I wish to be buried in a metal coffin next to my father, and to remain there until the Jewish people will transfer my remains to Eretz Israel. The coffins of my father, my sister Pauline, and of my close relatives who will have died until then will also be transferred there."

In 1954, excavations revealed a Jewish burial cave from the time of the second Beit haMikdash on the grounds of the mountain; today, that burial cave is flanked by a memorial for soldiers whose burial sites are unknown. The mountain also houses the graves of those who fought to establish the Jewish State, leaders of the military, the police force and the Knesset. The mountain also hosts a memorial for victims of terror attacks, and for those who perished on their way to Israel. Yad vaShem is nearby, as is Israel's National Military Cemetery. National ceremonies commemorating Yom haZikaron, Israel's Memorial Day for fallen soldiers and victims of terror, are held at Har Herzl.

Two of Israel's best-known Prime Ministers chose other burial places for themselves: David Ben Gurion is buried near his home in Sde Boker, and Menachem Begin asked to be buried next to his wife on Har haZeitim (Mount of Olives).

An interactive map of Har Herzl is available at <http://bit.ly/IRU8yM>.

torczyner@torontotorah.com

Why did Hashem command the laws of *tzara'at* to both Moshe and Aharon?

Both the **Ramban** and the **Ibn Ezra** write that the command should have been given only to Moshe, like all other commandments. Nevertheless, since all of the laws of *tzara'at* require the involvement of the kohanim, Aharon also received the instructions.

R' Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, founder of the neo-Orthodox movement in Germany, writes that having both Moshe and Aharon instructed together indicates a special importance to the laws being related. It is meant to show that the theoretical understanding and their practical establishment, represented by Moshe, must also be accompanied by the training and education of all of the individuals involved for such understanding and practice.

When describing the affliction which appears on his home, why must a person use the term *k'nega*, "like an affliction" and not *nega*, "an affliction"?

Rashi explains that since only the Kohen may validate the claim of the

affliction, even a great Torah scholar may only relate that he spotted something which is "like an affliction", as it is indeterminate until the Kohen confirms it.

In his supercommentary on Rashi, the third Hakham Bakshi, or Grand Rabbi, of the Ottoman Empire, **R' Eliyahu Mizrachi**, questions Rashi's explanation as follows: Since a non-Kohen cannot render a decision regarding the affliction, it is immaterial whether he uses language of certainty ("an affliction") or that of doubt ("like an affliction"). Rather, he relates in the name of his teachers, the use of the language of doubt is to impart the requirement of each individual to be humble, and not to declare an opinion on a matter for which his opinion is inconsequential.

The **Maharal of Prague**, in his **Gur Aryeh** supercommentary on Rashi, explains that it would be a lie to emphatically state that he saw "an affliction": the spot beheld is not an affliction until rendered so by the Kohen.

According to **R' Yom Tov Lipmann Heller**, in his **Tosafot Yom Tov** commentary on the Mishnah, the Torah

is warning us from speaking of evil which has not yet occurred, and may not occur. Since it is possible that the Kohen will rule that this is not an affliction, it is improper to wish evil upon oneself by describing it as one.

Similar to **R' Mizrachi**, **R' Baruch Epstein**, nephew of the Netziv and son of the author of the Aruch haShulchan, explicates in his **Torah Temimah** commentary that it is not proper to rule when the final ruling is in the hands of another.

For children: What is the significance of each of the items a *metzora* brings during his purification process?

Since *tzara'at* is a punishment for *lashon hara* (harmful speech), two birds are brought, since they incessantly chirp.

Wood from a cedar tree is brought since *lashon hara* is also a punishment for haughtiness, symbolized by the tall cedar.

Like the worm-based dye and the hyssop that must be brought, the afflicted must humble himself.

russlevy@gmail.com

Schedule for April 28 - May 4 / 6 - 12 Iyyar

Shabbat April 28

7:45 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Rav Kook on the Parshah, Or Chaim *not this week*

10:20 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Parshah, Clanton Park
1 hour before minchah Yair Manas: Gemara Sukkah, Mizrachi Bayit

45 minutes before minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Daf Yomi: Meilah 13, BAYT

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Building a House on Shabbat: Gemara Avodah Zarah, BAYT

Sunday, April 29

8:45 AM R' Yirmiyah Milevsky, Israel at 64; Mrs. Michal Horovitz, Why Not Uganda?, Bnai Torah, *breakfast, token fee*

8:45 AM R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, The Medinah and the Seder, Ayin l'Tzion, *breakfast, free*

8:45 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Complete Redemption?, Kehilat Shaarei Torah, *breakfast, free*

9:00 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, The Six Day War and Pesach Sheni, Mizrachi Bayit, *breakfast, free*

9:15 AM Hillel Horovitz, Redemption vs. Independence (Hebrew), Zichron Yisroel, *breakfast, free*

11:00 AM R' Baruch Weintraub, Hilchot Melachim, Or Chaim, *collegiates*

6:00 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic issues in Israel, Hebrew, 4 Tillingham Keep, *mixed*

40 minutes before minchah R' Baruch Weintraub, Halachic issues in Israel, Hebrew, Clanton Park, *men*

Monday, April 30

8:30 PM Hillel Horovitz, In-Depth Siddur, Clanton Park, *men*

Tuesday, May 1

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Zecharyah: Assault on Jerusalem, *Mekorot*, Shaarei Shomayim

7:15 PM R' Ezra Goldschmiedt, Ramban, BAYT

8:00 PM Hillel Horovitz, The Early Prophets, Bnai Torah

8:15 PM Yair Manas: Minchat Chinuch, Clanton Park

Wednesday, May 2

10:00 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Dramas of Jewish History: Enlightenment, BEBY, with Melton

8:00 PM R' Dovid Zirkind, Gemara Beitzah, 2nd Perek, Shaarei Shomayim

8:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Living Midrash, BAYT, *women*

8:30 PM R' Baruch Weintraub, Hilchot Melachim, Shomrai Shabbos, *men*

Thursday, May 3

8:00 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, X-Files of the Talmud 1 of 4, MNJCC

Friday, May 4

8:00 AM R' Dovid Zirkind, Friday Parshah Preview, Village Shul