

PACHAD DAVID

Tazria

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"On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Vayikra 12:3).

In these parshiot of Tazria and Metzora, we read about the topic of the *metzora*. Chazal point out that the word *metzora* contains the same letters as *motzi ra*, implying that the cause of *tzara'at* is the sin of slander, speaking negatively against other people.

There is another allusion in this topic: *Tzara'at* is a form of suffering and through this suffering a person is cleansed and purified from all his sins. This is the idea of the conjugation: "When a woman conceives... On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised." The parsha of *brit milah* is followed by the parsha of the *metzora*, to teach us that just as with the mitzva of *milah* the child connects to the covenant of Avraham Avinu, so too, the afflictions and suffering which a person endures from the *tzara'at*, remove the evil from him and connect him with Hashem Yitbarach. Afflictions always have a positive purpose; they come upon us for our good and one therefore shouldn't feel distressed when experiencing troubles.

The Mashgiach of Ponevezh explains why *tzara'at* appears gradually. It is first noticeable on the house, something slightly distant from the person, but nevertheless a person needs his house since it protects him from the cold and heat. If he doesn't realize that this befell him because of his sins, the *tzara'at* spreads to his clothes which cover a person's body and are thereby a step closer to him. If he still doesn't repent, then the *tzara'at* will affect his body which is the closest thing to him. This serves as a lesson that a person shouldn't become accustomed to blows and punishments from Hashem, but he should be sensitive to the message and arouse himself to consider Hashem's rebuke.

These stages serve as a lesson for us as to the ways of repentance. If a person internalizes the message when his house or body is afflicted, and purifies himself and wishes to reconnect to Hashem, the purpose of the affliction has been achieved.

The Gemara (*Berachot* 61b) talks about the death of the holy Tana, Rabbi Akiva. "He was taken out to be killed at the exact time of reciting Kriat Shema. The Romans razed his flesh with iron combs, while Rabbi Akiva accepted upon himself the yoke of Heaven. His

maskil Le'David

**Milah
and Tzara'at
Create a Bond
with Hashem**



talmidim called out, 'Rabbeinu! To this degree?' He replied: 'My entire life I was distressed about this verse, "with all your soul—even if your soul is taken," and I wondered, when will I have the chance to fulfill this? Now that my chance has come should I not fulfill it?' Rabbi Akiva drew out the word *echad* until his *neshama* left him. A Heavenly voice called out, 'Fortunate are you Rabbi Akiva that your soul left you at *echad*.'

What is the meaning of "My entire life I was distressed about this verse... when will I have the chance to fulfill this?" It seems that when Rabbi Akiva recited Kriat Shema every day and said, "You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul," he was prepared to sacrifice himself for the sake of sanctifying Hashem's Name, but he nevertheless wondered if he was merely phrasing a theoretical desire. Who can testify that if he was faced with the challenge, he would indeed be prepared to sacrifice his soul?

These thoughts caused him continual distress, until the day the Romans came to kill him through unbearable torture. At that moment he accepted upon himself the yoke of Heaven with joy. His talmidim cried out, "Rabbeinu! To this degree one must rejoice in serving Hashem?" He replied, "Certainly. Now it is most fitting for me to rejoice, for I see that my willingness to sacrifice my soul for the sake of Heaven is indeed sincere..."

We cannot fathom the greatness of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva possessed the *neshama* of Moshe Rabbeinu. The Gemara (*Menachot* 29b) describes how when Moshe went up to heaven, Hashem showed him Rabbi Akiva sitting and expounding on each crown above the letters of the Torah "heaps and heaps of laws." Moshe said, Ribbono Shel Olam, You have someone like this in Your world and You are giving the Torah through me?" He reasoned before Hashem that Rabbi Akiva was more fitting to give the Torah to Am Yisrael. Hashem said to him, "This is what I intended."

What a great lesson this is for us! If Rabbi Akiva, with his supreme greatness, doubted his intentions and was distressed his entire life because of this, how much more so are we obligated to be concerned about our yirat Shamayim. May it be His will that we merit to cleave to Hashem and serve Him wholeheartedly, Amen.

5 Nissan 5784
13 April 2024

1055



Hilula

5 Nissan

Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heshel,
the Ohev Yisrael of Apta

6 Nissan

Rabbi Ahron Ratta

7 Nissan

Rabbi Sasson Mizrachi

8 Nissan

Rabbi Eliyahu Shapira,
the Eliyahu Raba

9 Nissan

Rabbi Aryeh Levin,
Rav of the prisoners

10 Nissan

Rabbi Shalom Mashash,
Rav of Yerushalayim

11 Nissan

Rabbi Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz,
the Shelah Hakadosh





FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

Milah Protects from Punishment

"On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (*Vayikra* 12:3).

Chazal z"l say (*Devarim Rabba* 6:1): "Why is a baby circumcised on the eighth day? Because Hashem had mercy on him to wait until he has strength." This demonstrates that only on the eighth day does a baby have the strength to be circumcised. Why is it that specifically from the eighth day he is strong enough to undergo *brit milah*?

We can explain according to the Zohar Hakadosh (*Tazria* 44), who says that one circumcises a baby especially on the eighth day so that he should first experience a Shabbat whereby he receives the *neshama yeterah*, the additional vital soul which is influenced by the holiness of Shabbat. With the arrival of this soul, the baby will then endure. The Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh also writes (*Bereishit* 2:20), that before the arrival of Shabbat, the world was still weak and trembling; once Shabbat arrived the world was strengthened and established.

My esteemed and holy grandfather, Rabbeinu Yashayahu Pinto, zyl, asks why one circumcise the baby when it is only a few days old; why don't we wait until he grows up? He answers that it is well-known that a person can only protect himself from his yetzer hara and from trouble that comes to the world, if he possesses Torah and mitzvot. The power of Torah is enormous and awesome and can guard him from any bad things which come to this world. It is a defense for any troubles, a protection from any mishap and saves him from the yetzer hara. But a newborn baby, what can protect him? How can he be saved from the demons when he does not yet own the power of Torah? Therefore Hashem commanded to circumcise this baby, and the merit of this mitzva is so great that it meanwhile serves as a protection for him until he grows up and can learn the holy Torah.

Through the mitzva of *milah* which is performed on the eighth day (*shemini* from the word *neshama*), the *neshama* of the baby merits a connection with the awesome and honorable Name. This serves as both a spiritual and physical protection for him.



MEN OF FAITH

Paying for His Life

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan once met a person by the name of Chaim Cohen in the street. He promptly warned him, "I know that you plan to travel today by bus. Your bus will encounter a fatal accident and all the passengers will be killed. I advise you to donate some of your money for *tzedakah*, since '*tzedakah* saves one from death.' In this way your life will be spared."

"If what you say is true, then why doesn't the honorable Rav warn all the passengers of the bus, so that everyone should be saved?" Chaim inquired of the tzaddik.

Rabbi Chaim explained, "None of the other passengers will believe me. Therefore, I am only telling this to you and offering you a way to save yourself."

This is exactly what occurred on that day. The bus veered off a high cliff, and all the passengers were killed on the spot, except for Chaim Cohen, who was saved from death in the merit of the money that he gave for *tzedakah*.

Another anecdote on this topic:

The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan once met a Jew called Yichye Cohen. Rabbi Chaim informed him, "I know that you have in your pocket such and such an amount of money.

Give me money for *tzedakah*, and you will still have a certain sum left." Rabbi Chaim named the exact amount that would be left for him.

Yichye questioned, "If I give the honorable Rabbi so much money, I will not have enough left for all my needs."

The Rav promised him, "A blessing will rest on the money that will remain, which will benefit you and all your descendants."

Yichye Cohn did as the Rav requested. Ultimately, the blessing of the tzaddik was fulfilled. Yichye Cohn died as a wealthy man at a very old age, and merited that his descendants were wealthy as well.

This is the reward for placing one's trust in a tzaddik, as it says, "And they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant."



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Difficult to Control their Mouths

During a shiva call, Maran Harav Ahron Leib Steinman zt"l turned to the visitors and asked them, "Do you know the meaning of the words we say every day at the end of the *amidah* prayer 'My G-d, guard my tongue from evil'? Why do we pray that Hashem should guard our mouths; the person himself must guard his mouth, just as he guards himself and is careful not to cause harm? Harav Steinman answered that there are people who have a sharp tongue and cannot keep their mouths closed.

They are always ready with some retort; they have something to say about everything...

These people require a special prayer that Hashem should guard their mouths so they shouldn't say something inappropriate.

Ideally, a person should wait five minutes before expressing what he wishes to say, but Hashem fashioned it that our words flow immediately, for the sake of Torah learning!



WORDS OF THE SAGES

When Guiding Interns Causes Discomfort

“To rule on which day it is contaminated and on which day it is purified; this is the law of tzara'at” (Vayikra 14:57).

An interesting halachic question was brought before HaGaon Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Waldenberg shlita, author of *Titz Eliezer*, which he answered based on the explanation of the Netziv of Volozhin on the above verse.

A doctor in one of the Jerusalem hospitals wished to know if it is permissible to instruct interns by the bedside of patients, if the purpose is to teach the students and not for the sake of helping the patient? Maybe this contradicts the Doctors Oath, where a doctor swears not to reveal the patient's condition to strangers?

The Tzitz Eliezer answered that the oath is not a deterrent to guiding interns, for when taking the oath every doctor knows that part of his career includes coaching interns by the patients' bedside, just as he was taken on the rounds when he studied medicine. This being the case, he certainly did not intend to include this in his oath.

There is also an additional calculation:

The rule “[I gained] from my students more than from anyone,” applies to every form of expertise. By explaining the case to the interns, and from the questions that arise, it can often happen that the doctor considers a new angle for the benefit of the patient. So this practice of guiding the interns can also bring benefit to the patient.

However, there is a different perspective one must consider. If the

guidance involves exposing places on the patient's body, especially if these are normally concealed places, this could involve embarrassment for the patient.

The Tzitz Eliezer found an original proof for this idea from the words of the Netziv in his sefer *Hamek Sha'alah*. He explains that according to the words of the Raavad in Torat Kohanim, the words of the verse “to rule” mean that at the very time when the account comes before him, this is when the Kohen should teach. He would call his students to show them the kind of affliction and its particulars, on the day it became contaminated and also on the day it was purified.

The verse ends, “This is the law of tzara'at,” to teach us that this law is not valid in every place, only here concerning tzara'at. For in truth, when the person comes to the Kohen to ask about his status, great shame is caused to him when students gather and look at his afflictions. Therefore, in other similar situations it is definitely forbidden to do this. But in the case of tzara'at “This is the law.” It will serve as an atonement for him because he himself embarrassed someone else.

From here we can derive a proof, the Tzitz Eliezer concluded his answer to the doctor, that it is forbidden to show the patients' wounds to students, due to the prohibition of shaming others. It is therefore in place for the doctor to ask the patient for his permission, and if he does not consent one should avoid gathering the students around his bedside.



GUARD YOUR TONGUE

Choose Your Company

If a person goes and sits with a *ba'al lashon hara* (one who constantly talks negatively about others), even if he doesn't add anything negative of his own, he is nevertheless considered a sinner. He has

transgressed the words of Chazal who have commanded us to stay far away from hearing unfit speech.

All the more so, if he intends to listen to what the person has to say, his sin is extremely great.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi
David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

Unearthing Her Intended, Down Under

I was once receiving people in Marseille, at the home of Mr. Tzion Marciano. In the evening, I was asked to speak at the Beit Hakeneset nearby. After this speech, I was extremely exhausted from my grueling schedule. But I overcame my weariness and continued seeing people there, as well. Harav Amram, *shlita*, who acted as Dayan in Marseille, was sitting at my side the entire time.

A couple came to me, together with their baby boy. The woman turned to me, animatedly. “Honored Rav, this baby was born in the merit of your prayers. I did not find my soul-mate for many long years. Throughout that difficult period, I would come to you, asking for your blessings. Eventually, you yourself were greatly distressed at my plight.

“Last year, when I came to you yet once again for a *berachah*, you suddenly turned to me and said, ‘Maybe your intended is in faraway Australia? Go there and try to rebuild your life on that continent. If nothing happens, return to Marseille. Hashem will help.’

“Whoever heard of my proposed adventure Down Under mocked me to my face. But I was determined to follow the word of the Rav and made the 20,000-kilometer trip around the world. But only one week went by before a match was proposed, from a family of *chassidim* and *yirei Shamayim*. Here is my soul-mate, standing before you. *Baruch Hashem*, we merited having a beautiful baby boy!

“Since the time I met my husband, I have helped him greatly in strengthening his commitment to Hashem and His Torah. *Baruch Hashem*, he now keeps Shabbat, wears tefillin, and has encouraged me to cover my hair and reinforce my loyalty to Judaism also.”

Greatly touched by her tale, I told Rav Amram that this is another indication of the tremendous power of my fathers, zy“a. Their merit allowed this woman to find her match, establish a family, and return to her Father.



PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Material Abundance

“Upon the completion of the days of her purity for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring a sheep within its first year for a burnt-offering, and a young dove or a turtledove for a sin-offering” (Vayikra 12:6).

The order of the verses that speak about the laws of a woman who gives birth, gives rise to a question:

After the Torah details the offering a woman brings, it seems to end the topic with the verse “This is the law of one who gives birth to a male or to a female.” But then the following verse returns to speak about the offering of the woman who cannot afford the original offering. “But if she cannot afford a sheep, then she shall take two turtledoves...”

What is the meaning behind this?

Rabbi Sar Shalom of Belz, zt”l, answers that here we have an explicit proof in the Torah that according to the law and according to what is fitting, the Jewish people should be blessed with plenty. When the Torah tells us “This is the law of one who gives birth,” this is the ideal situation of the woman, that she is able to afford the offering of a

rich person. According to the Torah, each woman who gives birth should have plenty for all her needs. And if it should happen sometimes that “she cannot afford,” this is already not according to the Torah...

On the same lines, the Sfat Emet says that it is customary to be lavish with the *brit milah* feast to bring down *parnassah* for Klal Yisrael, for the words “This is the law of the one who gives birth” are written straight after the offering of the rich one who gives birth, to tell us, “This is the law of the one who gives birth,” this should be the practice.

The Goal of Tzara'at

“If a tzara'at affliction will be in a person, he shall be brought to the Kohen” (Vayikra 13:9).

Why does it say, “he shall be brought,” meaning he doesn't go by himself but he is brought by someone else to the Kohen?

The sefer *Bnei Yosef* explains this according to the Chazal that the cause of tzara'at is a person's sins, and therefore he needs to go to the Kohen who offers him words of reproof so he should repent.

When a person who has tzara'at goes to the Kohen, his intention is to seek healing. But the Torah's intention was primarily that he should go to the Kohen to be purified from his sin, since this was the entire purpose of the affliction. Therefore, the verse says

“he shall be brought to the Kohen,” for according to the purpose of the affliction, he is brought against his wish to the Kohen so he should learn to repent. If not for the tzara'at he wouldn't go to the Kohen to hear words of admonition and rebuke. The affliction brings him, by force, to hear words of reproof.

Repentance from Deep Within the Heart

“The Kohen should look after the affliction has been washed, and behold! – the affliction has not changed its color” (Vayikra 13:55).

Rabbeinu Yaakov Abuchatzera, zt”l, brings in his sefer *Pituchei Chotam*, that if a person who stumbles and sins understands that he didn't behave correctly and accepts upon himself to change his ways, fortunate is he and fortunate is his lot. This attitude can be compared to a garment that becomes stained and is then laundered.

But the decision to change his ways, and his commitment for the future, is clearly only part of the mitzva of repentance. Still, “the affliction has not changed its color,” the sin has not been wiped away as long as the sinner has not completed his repentance, which requires honest regret and confession of his sin.

This is what the verse is hinting at: “You shall burn it in fire,” with regret that comes from the depths of your heart.

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