



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
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Thoughts on Parashat TAZRIA / METZORA

Year 23

by Dayan Abraham David

'Isha Ki Tazria Ve Yalda Zachar', 'A woman who conceives and gives birth to a male child becomes unclean for 7 days' etc. Why does the Torah have to begin with reference to the conception? What we are concerned with is the birth which causes the *'Tumah'*. The Zohar tells us that the birth which follows is the result of the conception. The spiritual level and future capabilities of the child born is given at the conception according to the thoughts of the parents at that time. If the thoughts are good and Holy then the child is given a Holy *'Neshama'* with good characteristics.

We could explain a different angle; we see that the subject of *'Tzarat'*, leprosy follows the subject of the birth of a child; how do they connect? Our Rabbis tell us there is a great lesson for us in the subject of *'Tzarat'*, leprosy which really was a spiritual malady. The skin turned to white and the hairs on it too. Even if the actual *'Tzarat'* was very small in area, if two hairs turned white, he was pronounced unclean and needed to go through

a whole process to become clean in order to be accepted back into the community. But if only one hair turned white he was not *'Tameh'*. Our attention is drawn to the fact that even the minute difference between the change of one hair and two hairs is dictated by G-d. G-d is not only everywhere but looks with scrutiny on every aspect of our lives to the smallest detail, our Rabbis term this as *'Hashgacha pratit'*, detailed scrutiny. When a baby is born, we look at that as the beginning, we are involved and feel responsible to provide all it needs to survive and grow, but we forget that it really began before at conception. The wonderful development from that small beginning without any help from us with G-d providing all its needs to develop in those nine months to become a perfect human being, ready to adapt to the challenges of a new world, this we ignore. We only appreciate the birth and credit ourselves with the child's development from then on. The Torah opens our eyes to the fact that it began from conception *'Isha Ki Tazria ve yalda'*, a woman conceived and gives birth so that we appreciate G-d who has developed a perfect human from a small microscopic beginning, concealed from our eyes. If we do

not appreciate his wonders in goodness, then He shows us his '*Hashgacha pratit*', his involvement in the smallest changes in our body in the form of '*Tzarat*', when the two hairs turn white. The punishment of '*Tzarat*' came for the sin of '*lashon harah*', bad mouthing people. Words seem of no consequence, they are said and gone, or so we think, but G-d is present and his scrutiny intense, it is all noted and a person must pay the consequences.

In the positive, the words of Torah and kindness are never lost and will bring us the reward we deserve.

Metzora

The Bnei Yisrael were told that when they entered the Promised Land inherited the homes of the Canaanites, G-d might bring a plague of leprosy on the house. If the Cohen pronounced it tameh then the contaminated walls would have to be demolished and the stones removed outside the camp. Sometimes the whole house might have to be demolished. What sort of welcome was this to the Promised Land? Rashi tells us it was in fact a blessing in disguise, for in this way the Israelites discovered the treasures hidden by the Canaanites behind those walls. But this needs an explanation for if this was only so that they could discover the treasures, surely G-d could find them a more pleasant way to do so. In fact this was really a test to see if they had remained faithful to the commands of the Torah in their new homeland. Would they report

to the Cohen the Nega Tzara'at, leprosy, or would they try to cover it up so as not to have to demolish their newly acquired possession. If they succumbed to this temptation they would lose out on the treasures but if they withstood this they would find invaluable treasures. G-d tests us in life with situations, which require sacrifice and commitment, but just beyond it there can be found wonderful rewards.

The Zohar HaKadosh explains it differently. The houses of the Canaanites had been built in honour of their Avodah Zarah and were full of tumah, which emanated a bad influence on those who would dwell within its walls. Nega Tzara'at, leprosy, appeared on the walls of those houses most contaminated which were then demolished, uncovering the hidden treasure, which paid for the construction of a new home built with kedushah, holiness. The Zohar HaKadosh draws the lesson that if man can influence inanimate objects for tumah and avodah zarah, which in turn would give off bad vibes on those who would come to dwell within its walls. How much more so the forces of kedushah could influence inanimate objects to impart a good influence to those who would come into contact with it.

Beginnings are most important, when we enter into or build a new home; the thoughts we have at the time are vital, for these will effect those who dwell within it. That is why we are most particular to make a '*Chanukat HaBayit*' with the study of Torah and prayers so

as to bring into the home an aura of kedushah for the future within that home.

TORAH GEMS

A person is confronted daily with countless occasions for speaking Lashon Hara, slander. The effects of a spoken word are not tangible as are those of a sin performed in deed, and therefore we tend to treat this offence more lightly than other Torah prohibitions. The Tzara'at leprosy, punishment is no longer in effect, and its threat does not deter us from speaking evil as it did in the time of the Temple. How can we strengthen ourselves against the temptation to speak Lashon Hara?

Our Rabbis teach us that every word which leaves a person's mouth is taped in Heaven. One day, all his words will be played back to him. He will then attempt to excuse himself before the Heavenly Court by claiming "I was not aware of the gravity of the sin, I did not sin wilfully". He will, however, be answered. "It was your duty to realise that each of your statements, whether good or bad, said purposely or unintentionally, was put on record". A person should realise that a word once spoken does not evaporate in the air without leaving a trace, and therefore needs to be taken seriously.

The tongue is the organ which, of all the limbs and organs, moves with the least difficulty and greatest speed. Consequently, Lashon Hara is one of the sins committed most frequently, Hashem tells the tongue "I placed all the other limbs in an upright or slanted position, whereas you lie in the mouth horizontally, in a

resting position, so as to indicate that the tongue's natural position is one of rest, I imprisoned you with two enclosures, to warn your master not to let you loose, an inner wall of teeth and an outer wall of flesh, the lips which confine you."

The Chafetz Chaim explains that the tongue was created with the ability to move more swiftly than all the organs as a special kindness of Hashem. The reward for every word of Torah surpasses that of all the mitzvot. Therefore Hashem in His kindness enabled a person to speak thousands of words within minutes in order to ensure that he could gain the greatest possible reward.

Reflecting upon this it should encourage us to employ every organ only for beneficial uses for which it was intended by the Almighty – the tongue for Torah, Tefilla and benefit to our fellow man.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

The Mourning After:

Rabbi Shoul Dolinger, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Pri Eitz Chaim in Ashdod, Israel, recently retold how the Ponevezher Rav. Rabbi Yosef Kahanemen (1886 – 1969) was once approached by a gentleman who had just attended a funeral. The man seemed puzzled and asked the Rav: "What is the reason for the custom that one does not return from a funeral using the same route that he took to get there?" (See Taamei HaMinhagim No: 1034: Geshet HaChaim 14:20).

The Ponevezher Rav pondered for a moment and then, with typical perception lent a new perspective to the matter. "How can any thinking person go to cemetery" exclaimed the Rav "and come back the same as he went?"

Rabbi Kahanemen was most likely referring to a concept taught by

Shlomo HaMelech in Koheles (7:2). Shlomo HaMelech wrote: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to a house of partying for death is the end of all men and those that are living should take it to heart".

When one is confronted with death, be it in a mourner's home or at a funeral, one should ideally reflect on the severity and the seriousness of life. The Ponevezher Rav felt that this sobering experience should change a man and thus he should leave a funeral differently (both physically and spiritually) from the way he arrived.

'In the Footsteps of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn'

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

1. Crackers and matzot, which were not baked for Pesach, during the year, are mezonot for Sephardim according to the Shulchan Aruch since they need to be chewed a lot.
2. Matzot during Pesach have the din of bread even though they are brittle.
3. Matzot made for Pesach according to many Poskim are considered bread even after Pesach and the beracha for them would be HaMotze and Birchat HaMazon to be recited after. There are others who say that matzot are mezonot. We should therefore only eat them when we wash for bread or eat 225 grams of matzot which is Kebiyot seuda or in difficult situations we rely on the opinion that 165 grams is also Kebiyot seuda to be able to make Hamotzei and Birchat HaMazon. If one cannot do any of these options and he must eat then it is better to make Mezonot and Meyin Shalosh and not HaMotze and Birchat HaMazon on a small quantity.

4. If one wets the matzot to make it soft and pliable then he should make HaMotzei and Birchat HaMazon even on a smaller quantity and not mezonot and Mi'en shalosh
5. Some Poskim say that after the 14th of Iyar, Pesach Sheni, the matzot from Pesach are considered mezonot. However, the Ben Ish Hai holds that all year round they should only be eaten in a seuda. But we can rely on the first opinion which is brought down by Rabbi Mordecai Eliyahu.

***If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush
Please contact
Monty Sassoon 07787 571313
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724***

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by Jason
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses
followed by a kiddush**

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	7:50 pm
Shabbat terminates	9:03 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat for the summer	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat Shacharit	8:30 am
Shiur Pirkei Avot	6:25 pm
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit	7:25 pm
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Mincha followed by Arbit	
Arbit for the summer	7:45 pm