



חומש ויקרא

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*
יצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

Chumash Vayikra
The Book of Leviticus

Parshat Tazria-Metzora



Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213
5772/2012

THE TORAH - CHUMASH VAYIKRA
WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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by
Chabad of California

A project of
Chabad of California
741 Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-208-7511 / Fax 310-208-5811

Published by
Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-774-4000 / Fax 718-774-2718
editor@kehot.com

Order Department:
291 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-778-0226 / Fax 718-778-4148
www.kehot.com

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ISBN: 978-0-8266-0193-3
ISBN: 978-0-8266-0195-2 (set)

Published in the United States of America



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תַּזְרִיעַ Tazria

Overview

The name of this *parashah*, *Tazria*, literally means “She will cause to grow,” referring in this case to a mother’s conception of a child in her womb.¹ The first section of the *parashah* discusses the ritual defilement that a woman incurs as a result of childbirth; the rest of the *parashah* discusses the defilement contracted by a person or garment afflicted with the condition known as *tzara’at*.

Tzara’at is neither any disease with which we are familiar today nor any natural disease that was ever known to humanity. It is a physical condition directly and miraculously resulting from some spiritual flaw, rather than one contracted by a lack of hygiene or by exposure to any physical contagium.

As we have seen,² the Torah discusses two broad categories of defilement: spiritual defilement, which reduces and mars our sensitivity or receptivity to Divine consciousness, and ritual defilement, which renders us forbidden to enter the precincts of the Temple or to consume sacred food. Both of the two types of defilement discussed in this *parashah*—that incurred through childbirth and that accompanying *tzara’at*—are forms of ritual defilement.

The Temple and its rituals are designed to connect us with God, the source of all life and vitality. When we experience an encounter with death, decay, depression, mortality, or some other antithesis of life, the overwhelming confrontation with the apparent futility of life renders us temporarily incapable of participating in the life-affirming rituals of the Temple and the other, ancillary activities associated with it. Similarly, any nexus-point between life and death (such as childbirth) forces us to focus us on our mortality, thereby rendering us susceptible to pessimistic inactivity or depression until we undergo a process of “purification” designed to reorient us toward life, activity, and optimism.

In particular, *tzara’at* imparts the severest degree of ritual defilement: the afflicted individual is not only banned from entering the Temple; he or she is not allowed contact with the community at all. Thus excluded from Temple-life and communal life, the sufferer of *tzara’at* is—as the sages put it³—a walking metaphor for death.

Being that the *parashah* is so thoroughly focused on the particulars of defilement—the consciousness of death, inactivity, and depression—it seems strange that its name, which,

1. Rashi interprets this word differently, as noted in the interpolated translation.

2. Above, 11:1.

3. *Nedarim* 64b.

as we know, should express its general content, is an expression of “sowing,” which is an act of hopeful optimism intended to give rise to new life.



The solution to this enigma lies in the Torah’s general attitude toward reward and punishment. God Himself is the personification of perfect and absolute goodness, and as such, possesses no attribute we could characterize as “evil.” Evil, from the Jewish perspective, is not intrinsic to God, but an entity that He created in order to afford us, His creations, free choice. By the same token, God’s Torah, His gift to humanity, is an expression of His absolute, unmitigated goodness, and therefore, even the apparently negative phenomena we observe in it—threats, punishments, curses—are ultimately expressions of His goodness. The punishments specified in the Torah are all to be understood as corrective—even the various forms of capital punishment, which are only administered when a person has demonstrated that he or she is no longer capable of living properly and therefore needs to be brought to the next stage of existence, wherein his or her soul can progress unhindered toward its ultimate rectification.

In this light, contracting any of the various forms of defilement described in the Torah is not a vindictive punishment, but a signal and impetus to open a new chapter in spiritual growth. The purification process is carefully designed to lead us from a potentially detrimental path back to a positive, healthy mental orientation. It is in this sense that the name *Tazria*, “she will sow,” is indeed an appropriate name for a *parashah* that is wholly devoted to the details of defilement.

This appropriateness becomes all the more evident when we consider the fact that, as mentioned, the whole phenomenon of *tzara’at* is miraculous, having nothing to do with the normal processes of nature. If God “goes out of His way” to give us this indication that it is time to turn over a new leaf, we can appreciate how *tzara’at* is truly an opportunity for spiritual renewal and rebirth, altogether justifying the name *Tazria* for the *parashah*.⁴



A further reason why this *parashah* is aptly entitled *Tazria* is because sowing (together with the subsequent tasks necessary to ensure that the seed germinates and matures) is the epitome of arduous work.

This being the case, sowing can be seen as a metaphor for the difference between animal existence and human existence. Although animals think and feel, they do not possess the same degree of free choice that human beings do; they cannot oppose God’s will. Human beings, in contrast, can freely oppose God’s will, and if left to their own devices they will largely ignore it. They therefore need to be trained and refined in order to live up to their spiritual potential.

As an expression of this inborn inferiority to animals, human beings were the last to be created during the week of Creation. Of course, it is possible to posit precisely the opposite: that human beings were created last because they are the pinnacle of creation, and indeed, the sages articulate both perspectives. The difference between the two perspectives is that human beings can be considered superior to animals by virtue of the Divine gift with which only they have been endowed (their soul), while they can be considered inferior to animals due to their unique capacity to sin and propensity to do so.

4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, p. 70-80.

The fact that the laws concerning the defilement of animals, which appear in the preceding *parashah*, *Shemini*, precede the laws concerning the defilement of human beings, which appear in this *parashah*, can be understood as an expression of the perspective that humans are inferior to animals. Inasmuch as human beings are able to disobey God's will, much more effort is required to refine them than is required to refine or elevate an animal. The Torah therefore treats the simpler laws pertaining to animals before treating the more complex laws pertaining to people.

On the other hand, the fact that the laws of human defilement are presented after those of animal defilement can also be understood as an expression of the other perspective, in which humans are superior to animals. Precisely because we human beings possess free choice, we are capable of reaching much greater spiritual heights than animals, simply because overcoming the innate disadvantage of being capable of sin requires summoning greater spiritual potential than merely living out one's predestination.

This effort is alluded to in the name *Tazria*, for nurturing a seed after it is sown until it grows into a mature plant requires long, hard work, just as revealing and cultivating our innate potential requires prolonged, arduous effort.

In this light, both perspectives—namely, that we were created last either because of our inferiority or superiority to the rest of creation—are one. It is our inborn inferiority that, if we capitalize on it successfully, ultimately enables us to reveal our innate superiority as human beings created in God's image.

This potential is also alluded to in the name *Tazria*, since just as the new life that begins when we sow a seed becomes manifest only much later, after much effort has been expended, so does the innate potential of the soul become manifest only after we have expended great effort in refining ourselves, overcoming our inborn animalistic tendencies, and making ourselves and our world into God's true home.⁵

5. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 74-79.

ONKELOS

12:1 ומליל י"ז עם משה למימרו:
2 מליל עם בני ישראל למימרו
אתתא ארי תעדי ותליד דכר ותהי
מסאבא שבאעא יומין ביומי רחוק
סאובתה תהי מסאבא: 3 וביומא
תמינא יתגור בסרא דערלתה:
4 ותלתין ותלתא יומין תתיב
בדם דכו בכל קדשא לא תקרב
ולמקדשא לא תעול עד משלם
יומי דכותה:

12:1 וידבר יהוה אל־משה לאמור: 2 דבר אל־בני
ישראל לאמור אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר וטמאה
שבעת ימים בימי נדת דותה תטמא: 3 וביום השמיני
ימול בשר ערלתו: 4 ושלשים יום ושלשת ימים תשב
בדמי טהרה בכל־קדש לא־תנע ואל־המקדש לא
תבא עד־מלאת ימי טהרה:

RASHI

4 תשב. אין "תשב" אלא לשון עכבה, כמו: "ותשב
בקדש", "ושב באלני ממרא": בדמי טהרה. אף על
פי שרואה דם — טהורה: בדמי טהרה. לא מפיק ה"א,
והוא שם דבר כמו "טהר": ימי טהרה. מפיק ה"א, ימי
טהר שלה: לא תגע. אזהרה לאוכל, כמו ששנויה
ביבמות: בכל קדש וגו'. לרבות את התרומה, לפי
שזו טבולת יום ארוך שטבילה לסוף שבועה, ואין
שמשה מעריב לטהרה עד שקיעת החמה של
יום ארבעים, שלמחר תביא את כפרת טהרתה:

2 אשה כי תזריע. אמר רבי שמלאי: בשם שיצירתו
של אדם אחר כל בהמה חיה ועוף במעשה בראשית,
כף תורתו נתפרשה אחר תורת בהמה חיה ועוף: כי
תזריע. לרבות שאפלו ילדתו מחוי, שנמקה ונעשה
כמין זרע, אמו טמאה לדה: בימי נדת דותה תטמא.
כסדר כל טמאה האמורה בנדה, מטמאה בטמאת
לדה, ואפלו נפתח הקבר בלא דם: דותה. לשון דבר
הזב מגופה. לשון אחר: לשון מדה וחלי, שאין אשה
רואה דם שלא תחלה ראשה ואבריה כבדין עליה:

1. דברים א, מו. 2. בראשית יג, יח. 3. עה, א.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

her ritually defiled; in fact, contact with it does not render anyone ritually defiled: it is undefiled blood. On the other hand, she is not allowed to enter the Tabernacle precincts or partake of consecrated or sacrificial food. She is in a prolonged state of defilement, having done all she is required to do but simply awaiting the prescribed amount of time to pass before resuming her full participation in spiritual living.

This paradoxical state is reminiscent of our prolonged exile. We have undergone all the purification processes that exile is meant to accomplish,

and are now waiting for the required amount of time (and whatever providential experiences it is meant to bring) to pass. In the meantime, we are not allowed to rebuild and reenter the Temple nor partake of consecrated or sacrificial food.

In order to hasten this passage of time, we need to behave as the new mother does with regard to her post-immersion bleeding. We may indeed "see blood," i.e., encounter aspects of the physical world that under normal circumstances we could not prevent from "defiling" us, i.e., distracting us from God and weakening our Divine consciousness. But

INNER DIMENSIONS

[4-5] **She will remain:** The Hebrew word used here for "remain" (תשב) means "sit." The Torah frequently employs the image of God "sitting"; this image is meant to convey either of two notions: that of descent, similar to how we lower ourselves to sit "down"; or that of changelessness, as in the idiom of sitting "still."⁹ These two connotations of sitting allude to the two types of Divine creative energy ("light"): immanent light (*memalei kol almin*), which descends to enliven all aspects of creation, no matter how low their spiritual consciousness; and transcendent light

(*sovev kol almin*), which is unchanged by creation, enveloping all reality at once and equally.

Both these types of light are produced through processes of constraint, albeit of different varieties. God creates His transcendent light by willing it to shine; this act of will is a self-imposed focusing of His undifferentiated primal self-revelation on the act of creation. We may thus describe it as a "qualitative" constraint; the light is not limited in intensity, but it is focused on creation rather than on anything else. In contrast, God creates His immanent light by constricting

9. *Sefer HaChakirah*, 80b ff.

Defilement Contracted by Childbirth

12:1 God spoke to Moses, saying:

2 **“Speak to the Israelites, saying:** ‘Returning to the laws of ritual defilement, we will now discuss the ways in which the human body itself becomes a source of ritual defilement.¹

If a woman miscarries even a dissolved fetus (and, all the more so, a fully formed fetus) **or successfully gives birth to a male child, she becomes ritually defiled** and remains so **for seven days**. Specifically, **she becomes ritually defiled to the same degree** as she does during **the days of her menstrual flow**, as will be explained later,² even if she did not bleed during the birth.

3 **On the eighth day** after the birth of a viable boy, **the flesh of his foreskin must be circumcised**.³

4 She must immerse herself in a *mikveh* after seven full days have passed since she gave birth; this immersion purifies her from the ritual defilement caused by the birth. **For the following 33 days, she will remain in** a transitional state, during which defilement-by-bleeding is deferred⁴ and her uterine **blood** is therefore **not** a source of **defilement** should she bleed. After the 40th day from birth, uterine bleeding will once again ritually defile her, as will be explained later.

Normally, once someone has immersed in a *mikveh* in order to purify himself of ritual defilement, he is permitted to eat *terumah*⁵ after nightfall (if he is a priest or qualifying member of his household),⁶ and he is permitted to eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts the following morning. In the case of a woman who gives birth to a boy, however, these cutoff points are delayed: **she may not eat any consecrated food, nor may she enter the Sanctuary, until the 40 days of her purification** from this form of ritual defilement **have been completed**. Thus, she may only eat *terumah* after nightfall following the 40th day, and she may only eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts the following morning.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

4-5 **She will remain in this state:** This post-immersion period is an anomaly. On the one hand, the

woman can be bleeding, yet this uterine blood—unlike other types of uterine blood—does not render

— A CLOSER LOOK —

[2] **To the same degree as she does during the days of her menstrual flow:** After the woman immerses herself in a *mikveh* following the completion of the week following the birth,⁷ she is technically permitted to resume marital relations with her husband, even if she continues to bleed for some time afterward. Furthermore, for the duration of her “non-defiling-blood” period (40 days for the birth of a boy and 80 days for the birth of a female), marital relations are permitted

even if bleeding resumes after having stopped.

However, inasmuch as Jewish practice (which, in this case as in many others, has been enshrined in Jewish law) applies the menstrual restrictions on marital relations to *any* sighting of blood, as will be explained later,⁸ a woman who gives birth must wait until she has ceased bleeding totally (and then wait a full week) before immersing in a *mikveh* and resuming marital relations.

1. See above, 11:1. 2. Below, 15:19-24. 3. Genesis 17:1-14. 4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 80-88. 5. Exodus 22:28; Numbers 18:12; Deuteronomy 18:14. 6. Below, 22:7. 7. Below, v. 4. 8. Below, on 15:19.

— ONKELOS —

5 ואם נקבתא תליד ותיה מסאבא
ארבעה עשר כרחוקה ושתין ושתא
יומין תתיב על דם דכח: 6 ובמשלם
יומי דכותה לבא או לברתא
תיתי אמר בר שתה לעלתא ובר
יונה או שפניא לחטאתא לתרע
משכן זמנא לזת כהנא: 7 ויקרבנה
קדם יי ויכפר עלה ותדכי מסאובת
דמוזא דא אורייתא דילדתא לכר
או לנוקבא: 8 ואם לא תשכח ידה
במסת אמרא ותסב תרין שפנין
או תרין בני יונה חד לעלתא
וחד לחטאתא ויכפר עלה כהנא
ותדכי:

5 ואם-נקבה תלד וממאה שבעים בנדתה ויששים יום
וששת ימים תשב על-דמי טהרה: 6 ובמלאת ימי
טהרה לבן או לבת תביא בבש בן-שנתו לעלה ובן
יונה או-תר לחטאת אל-פתח אהל-מועד אל-הכהן:
7 והקריבו לפני יהוה וכפר עליה וטהרה ממקד דמיה
זאת תורת הילדת לזכר או לנקבה: 8 ואם-לא תמצא
ידה די שח ולקחה שתיתרים או שני בני יונה אחד
לעלה ואחד לחטאת וכפר עליה הכהן וטהרה: פ

— RASHI —

8 אחר לעלה ואחד לחטאת. לא הקרימה הכתוב
אלא למקראה, אבל להקריבה — חטאת קודם
לעולה, כך שנינו בזבחים בפרק "כל התדיר":

7 והקריבו. למדך שאין מעבדה לאכל בקדשים אלא
אחד מהם, ואי זה הוא? זה חטאת, שנאמר: "וכפר
עליה וטהרה", מי שהוא בא לכפר, בו הטהרה
תלויה: וטהרה. שער, כאן קרויה טמאה:

.א, ז, 4

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

and the final Redemption will be ushered in.¹²

7 She was considered "defiled": Although ideally, every Jew should be ritually pure at all times in order to be able to enter the Temple precincts and experience the heightened spiritual consciousness attainable there, the Torah does not normally require a person who has become ritually defiled to rush to rid himself of defilement at the earliest opportunity. (The exception is the pilgrim festivals, for which all Jews are required to be undefiled in order to be able to partake of the sacrifices that must be offered up on these occasions.¹³)

In the case of the new mother, however, since the Torah considers her "defiled"—even though in name only—and considers her not to have completed her atonement process during her extended

purification period, it is clear that she is encouraged to offer up her sin-offering at the earliest permissible opportunity.

The sages teach us that in some sense God fulfills all the commandments He obligates us to perform. Thus, if He urges the new mother to complete her purification process at the earliest opportunity, not to spend even one extra moment deprived of the opportunity to enter the Temple and partake of its holiness, euphoria, and exhilaration, it follows that He is equally anxious to redeem us from our exile so we can "join Him," so to speak, both in the rebuilt Temple and in our spiritually elevated lives, which will also become His "Temple" with the advent of the messianic era. The only reason He delays our redemption is in order that we, too, yearn to be redeemed immediately.¹⁴

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] the intensity of the transcendent light; we may therefore describe it as a "quantitative" constraint.¹⁵

The woman who gives birth, in this context, is an allegory for how God creates the universe: her "remaining"/"sitting" alludes to the two varieties of constraint that produce the two types of

Divine light that create and sustain the world.

The purpose of both of these acts of constraint is to create a world antithetical to Divine consciousness and revelation, which can then be transformed into being consummately conducive to Divine consciousness and revelation.¹⁶

12. Likutei Sichot, vol. 7, pp. 90-91. 13. Deuteronomy 14:8. 14. Likutei Sichot, vol. 27, pp. 85-87. 15. Torat Shalom, p. 147. 16. Likutei Sichot, vol. 7, pp. 88-90.

5 If she gives birth to a female child, she becomes ritually defiled—to the same degree as she does during her menstruation period—and remains so for two weeks instead of one. She must immerse herself in a *mikveh* after these two weeks have passed; this immersion purifies her from the ritual defilement caused by the birth. Her transitional period, too, is twice that of a woman who gives birth to a boy: **she will remain in** this state—during which defilement-by-bleeding is deferred, her uterine **blood is not** a source of **defilement**, and she is forbidden to eat consecrated food or enter the Sanctuary—for **66 additional days**. Similarly, she may only eat *terumah* after nightfall following the 80th day, and she may only eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts the following morning.

6 When the period of her purification has been completed, whether the 40 days **for a son or** the 80 days **for a daughter**, then, the following morning (i.e., of the 41st or 81st day, respectively), **she must bring a sheep in its first year as an ascent-offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin-offering to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and give them to the priest**. Although the woman has committed no sin by giving birth, she is nevertheless required to bring a sin-offering in order that the birth contribute toward the eventual full atonement for Eve's sin of having eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, part of the corrective punishment for which was that childbirth be painful.¹⁰

7 The priest must first offer up the sin-offering before God and thereby effect atonement for her. Inasmuch as until this point she was forbidden to eat sacrificial meat or enter the Tabernacle precincts, she was considered “defiled” in that regard. Thus—through the sin-offering—**she will be purified**, not only in fact but also in name, **from** the ritual defilement that she contracted when she delivered a child from **the source of her blood**,¹¹ and from that time on be allowed to eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts. After offering up her sin-offering, the priest must offer up her ascent-offering. **This is the law that applies to a woman who gives birth, whether to a male or a female.**

8 If she cannot afford a sheep for her sin-offering, she may—instead of bringing a sheep for an ascent-offering and a fowl for a sin-offering—**take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and offer up one as an ascent-offering and one as a sin-offering. The priest must first effect atonement for her through the sin-offering and she will thus be rid of this defilement**. He must then offer up the ascent-offering on her behalf.”

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

when we encounter such aspects of life, we must nonetheless remain undefiled: we should pay their enticements no mind, remaining staunchly true to our true selves and our Divine mission.

By not succumbing to the allurements of the mate-

rial world, we will be able to proceed to the next stage in this process: elevating the material world itself, transforming it into an expression of Divinity (i.e., revealing that the “blood” itself is undefiled).

The required period of waiting will then be over,

10. Genesis 3:1-16; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 85. 11. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 80-86.

— ONKELOS —

13:1 ומליל יי עם משה ועם אהרן
למימר: 2 אנש ארי יהי במשך
בסרה עמקא או עדיא או בקרא
יהי במשך בסרה למכתש סגור
ימיתי לות אהרן כהנא או לות
חז מבנוהי כהניא:

13:1 וידבר יהוה אל-משה ואל-אהרן לאמר: 2 אדם
בייחיה בעור-בשרו שאת או-ספחת או בהרת והיה
בעור-בשרו לנגע צרעת והובא אל-אהרן הכהן או
אל-אחד מבניו הכהנים:

— RASHI —

בשחקים: אל אהרן וגו'. גזרת הכתוב היא, שאין
טמאת נגעים וטהרתן אלא על פי כהן:

2 שאת או ספחת וגו'. שמות נגעים הם, ולכנות זו
מוז: בהרת. חכרבורות, טי"א בלעז, וכן: "בהיר הוא

5. קתם. 6. איוב לו, כא.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

2 Individuals of otherwise sterling character: The task of refining ourselves, of realizing the Torah's vision for us as human beings, is long and arduous, but entirely possible to implement. The Torah itself testifies that fulfilling its instructions "is not in heaven...not beyond the sea...but very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, [making it easy for you] to fulfill it."³¹ Moreover, at each step of the way, God assists us in navigating the subtle pitfalls that threaten to thwart our progress. In the words of the sages, "When someone sets out to purify himself, he is assisted from above."³²

This principle is demonstrated clearly by the phenomenon of *tzara'at*, which affects only individuals who have refined themselves as much as they can using all the resources available to them: the study of the Torah; the practice of its commandments; introspection; repentance; the cultivation of ethical conduct in business and personal life; the development of mature faith, trust in God, devotion to one's Divine mission and alacrity in performing it, and so on. Utilizing all these tools to the fullest, the individual might eventually purge all the dross from his psyche, thereby transforming himself into

❧ A CLOSER LOOK ❧

[2] Wool-white spot: When two patches of color are placed side by side, the darker-colored area will appear raised relative to the lighter-colored area. Thus, the Hebrew word for a wool-white spot (שאה) literally means "raised": since its whiteness is less intense than that of the *baheret*, it therefore appears raised in comparison to it—even though it appears sunken compared to the

unaffected, surrounding skin.³³

An area: This area is further equated with the average area covered by 36 hairs (6 hairs by 6 hairs) as they grow naturally on the body. The spot need not be a perfect square, but if it is less than 6 hairs wide, it is not considered *tzara'at*, no matter what its length.³⁴

❧ INNER DIMENSIONS ❧

[2] Tzara'at: Although *tzara'at* does not result from any natural physiological condition, when Divine providence decrees that this condition appear on a person, the resulting lesion is produced by limiting the circulation of blood in the area, which then turns white. This obstruction is, in turn, the physical manifestation of its corresponding spiritual antecedent: the obstruction of the flow of Divine consciousness from *chochmah* to *binah*. This is alluded to by the fact that one of the Names of God associated with *binah* is *Ekyeh* (אהיה); the numerical value of the regressive iteration of this Name (אהיה + אהי + אהי) is 44,

the numerical value of the word for "blood" (דם). The psychological equivalent of this blockage between *chochmah* and *binah* occurs when we contemplate, as we should, God's transcendence and how He manifests Himself in creation, but our heightened awareness of God's presence does not cause us to feel nullified within that presence.

When this self-nullification is lacking, our enhanced awareness of God can actually inflate our ego even further, instead of nullifying it as it should. In the words of the sages, "If [the student] merits, [the study of the Torah] acts for him

31. Deuteronomy 30:12-14. 32. *Shabbat* 104a. 33. *Sifra*, *Vayikra* 13:2. 34. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 1:7-8.

Tzara'at that Develops out of a White Dermal Lesion

13:1 God spoke to Moses, instructing him to convey His words¹⁷ to Aaron, saying:

2 “In addition to contracting ritual defilement through birth,¹⁸ death,¹⁹ or certain discharges from the reproductive organ,²⁰ the possibility will exist, from now on, for a person or his or her possessions to become ritually defiled by a condition termed *tzara'at*, the symptoms of which are specific types of lesions or discolorations, as follows. This condition specifically affects individuals of otherwise sterling character and moral excellence who have committed the sin of gossip, slander,²¹ or haughtiness.²² If *tzara'at* appears on their bodies, it will appear on their heads if they are guilty of haughtiness and elsewhere if they are guilty of gossip or slander.²³ It is an entirely spiritual, miraculous condition, unrelated to any natural disease and with no physiological cause.

If a person develops (a) a wool-white spot, (b) an egg-membrane-white spot, (c) a snow-white spot, (d) a lime-white spot, or (e) a spot of any of these four degrees of whiteness tinged with red streaks—but not so many red streaks that the spot loses its white appearance²⁴—on the skin of his flesh, covering at least an area equivalent to a square the length of each of whose sides is equal to the diameter of a Cilician bean²⁵ [i.e., 154 mm² or 0.24 in²], and it seems, according to the symptoms that will be described presently, that it forms a lesion of *tzara'at* on the skin of his flesh, he must be brought to Aaron the high priest, or to one of his sons, the regular priests, or their successors, for only they are authorized to pronounce someone or something defiled or undefiled on account of *tzara'at*. (Nonetheless, if a priest erroneously pronounces someone undefiled who is in fact defiled, his declaration is ineffective.²⁶)

Hebrew Name	Translation	Degree of Whiteness ²⁷
בהרת	bright spot	shiny like snow
ספחת של בהרת	adjunct to bright spot	shiny like lime
שאת	raised (-looking) spot	dull like clean, white wool
ספחת של שאת	adjunct to raised (-looking) spot	dull like an egg membrane

Figure 1. White Lesions that can Become *Tzara'at*, in Decreasing Order of Whiteness

Since the priest must examine the lesion before pronouncing the person defiled or undefiled, a blind priest is disqualified from rendering judgment in cases of lesions suspected to be *tzara'at*.²⁸ The priest may not examine someone or something suspected of suffering from *tzara'at* during the festivals, nor may he inspect a bridegroom (or any of the bridegroom's possessions) during the seven days of rejoicing following the bridegroom's wedding.²⁹

A spot that is darker white than any of these four degrees of whiteness is a simple lack of pigmentation, which cannot develop into *tzara'at*.³⁰

17. Rashi on 1:1, above. 18. Above, 12:1-7. 19. Above, 5:2-3; 11:24-40; below, 17:15, 22:8; Numbers 19, 5:1-4. 20. Above, 5:3; below, 15:1-33. 21. Rashi on v. 46, below; see Numbers 12:10. 22. Rashi on 14:4, below. 23. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 99. 24. Below, vv. 19, 42-43; Rashi *ad loc.*; *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:4. 25. *Negaim* 6:1; *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 14:1; *Shiurei Torah* 3:20 (pp. 233-239). 26. Rashi on v. 37, below. 27. *Negaim* 1:1.28. Rashi on v. 12, below; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 85-86. 29. Rashi on v. 14, below. 30. Below, vv. 38-39.

— ONKELOS —

3 וְיִחְזִי כִהְנָא יֵת מִכְתָּשָׁא בְּמִשְׁךְ
בְּסָרָא וְשַׁעַר בְּמִכְתָּשָׁא אֲתֵּהֲפִיךְ
לְמַחֲזֹר וּמִחְזִי מִכְתָּשָׁא עֲמִיק
מִמֶּשֶׁךְ בְּסָרָה מִכְתָּשׁ סְגִירוּתָא
הוּא וְיִחְזִינָה כִהְנָא וְיִסְאֵב יֵתָהּ:

3 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנִּגַּע בְּעוֹר־הַבָּשָׂר וְשַׁעַר בִּנְגַע הָפֶךְ |
לָבָן וּמִרְאָה הַנִּגַּע עִמָּךְ מֵעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ נִגַּע צָרַעַת הוּא
וְרָאָהּ הַכֹּהֵן וְטִמְּא אֹתָו:

— RASHI —

הַצֵּל: וְטִמְּא אֹתָו. יֹאמֵר לוֹ: טִמְּא אֶתָּה. שֶׁשַּׁעַר לָבָן
סִימָן טִמְּאָה הוּא, גִּזְרַת הַכְּתוּב:

3 וְשַׁעַר בִּנְגַע הָפֶךְ לָבָן. מִתְחַלָּה שְׂחֹר וְהָפֶךְ לָלָבָן
בְּתוֹךְ הַנִּגַּע, וּמֵעוֹט "שַׁעַר" שְׁנַיִם: עִמָּךְ מֵעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ.
כָּל מִרְאָה לָבָן עִמָּךְ הוּא, כִּמְרָאָה חֲמָה עִמָּךְ מִן

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

ger occurs: since the destruction of the Temple, it is simply not possible for us to refine ourselves so consummately that the only imperfections left within us are those that are signaled by the onset of *tzara'at*.)

When the only evil remaining within a person is of such a subtle nature, it can only surface in very superficial, unpremeditated behavior. The archetype of such behavior is gossip, which often takes the form of a casual remark that slips through otherwise innocuous conversation. Speech is indeed a superficial activity, and it is therefore relatively easy to control—this being the reason why it is one of the first aspects of our lives that we are bidden to refine.⁴³ But it is also an expression of the soul, and therefore, unrehearsed speech can at times betray the inner recesses of the heart.

For these reasons, *tzara'at* afflicts in particular people who are guilty of nothing else but gossip, and it appears on the superficial elements of their lives: their skin, their clothing, and their houses. These entities are three increasingly external layers that envelop us: our skin is our innermost layer of "clothing," tailored perfectly to our bodies; next come our actual clothes, also cut to fit our bodies but not as precisely as our skin; and finally, our homes, into which we "fit," conducting our essential life-activities within them, but which are the least-precisely tailored to us physically.

Tzara'at first affects the outermost "garment," the house, because at first, gossip is entirely superficial. If the individual does not take this cue and neglects to purge himself of his inner, residual evil,

tzara'at breaks out on his clothing, indicating that his unrestrained gossip has given the deep-seated evil it expresses the chance to seep into him from the outside, so to speak, so that his behavior is less superficial than it was originally. If he ignores this cue as well, *tzara'at* breaks out on his skin, indicating that this evil, although still superficial, is now part of him. At this stage, he must be ostracized from society, and hopefully this demonstration of the consequences of his behavior will inspire him to mend his ways.

Since *tzara'at* is intended to cure the individual of his hidden evil, the diagnostic and purification rituals must be overseen by a priest. The priest is the earthly embodiment of God's infinite loving-kindness, which alone is able to uproot and weed out this otherwise inaccessible evil. Furthermore, it is specifically the priest's speech that frees the sufferer from his defilement, for in order to counteract the expression of the sufferer's inner evil via his unrecited speech, the priest must employ his power of holy speech to elicit the inner goodness of God's infinite loving-kindness.⁴⁴

For only they are authorized to pronounce someone or something defiled: It is important to note that until the priest pronounces an individual defiled, he is not considered to be so, even if he exhibits all the indicative symptoms. Thus, before the pronouncement of the priest, these symptoms do not reflect defilement; indeed, very similar symptoms—and in some cases, even more serious ones—can indicate freedom from defilement.

Significantly, the principal color of the lesions that

❧ A CLOSER LOOK ❧

[3] See Figure 2: The flowcharts in this *parashah* and the next one depict the diagnostic processes for the various forms of *tzara'at* according to the contextual meaning of the Torah. The actual di-

agnostic processes derived through halachic exegesis, as detailed in the Mishnah⁴⁵ and the Codes of Law,⁴⁶ are somewhat more complex, and in some details, different.

43. Introduction to *Pokeiach Ivrim*, pp. 9-12. 44. *Likutei Torah* 2:22b; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 65-69, 74-75. 45. Chiefly in the tractate *Negaim*. 46. Chiefly in *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at*.

3 *Tzara'at* can develop out of any of these four types of white spots. There are three signs that indicate that a white lesion has developed into *tzara'at*: white hairs, healthy flesh,³⁵ and spreading (see Figure 2, page 97). The rules regarding white hairs are as follows: **The priest must examine the lesion on the skin of his flesh, and if two or more originally dark hairs within the lesion have turned white since the appearance of the lesion³⁶—whether the appearance of the lesion, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, is deeper than that of the unaffected skin of his flesh (due to its shininess), even though the spot is not actually deeper than the skin, or, in the case of the wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, the appearance of the lesion is not deeper than that of the skin (due to its dullness)³⁷—it is a lesion of *tzara'at*. When the priest sees this, he must pronounce him ritually defiled.**

The practical ramifications of the ritual defilement contracted on account of *tzara'at* are the same as those for the ritual defilement contracted by a man who has suffered two or more discrete non-seminal discharges,³⁸ which will be discussed in detail later.³⁹

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

an altogether righteous person, who no longer has to wrestle with evil. Such a person's life-challenge is now to constantly ascend to ever higher levels of Divine consciousness and to inspire others to emulate his example.

On the other hand, after the individual has exhaust-

ed all these tools, some subtle evil might still remain, lurking so deep within the individual that he might never become aware of it on his own. When this is the case, God signals him to this effect by afflicting him with *tzara'at*.

(It is therefore understood why *tzara'at* no lon-

— INNER DIMENSIONS —

[continued...] as an elixir of life; if he does not, it acts as an elixir of death."⁴⁰ The word for "merit" (זכה) also means "to be refined," intimating that the "merit" that determines whether the study of the Torah betters or debilitates the student is his degree of spiritual refinement, i.e., lack of ego.

This amplified sense of self intoxicates us with overconfidence, which, unless checked, will corrupt us in many ways. It can delude us into thinking that we can safely lower our guard against the enticements of materialism; it can render us overly judgmental of others (hence the increased propensity toward gossip or slander); it can exaggerate our self-estimation, thereby leading us to depression when we fail to live up to our unrealistic expectations for ourselves, and so on. Whatever the case, the forces of evil siphon off Divine energy from this unbalanced *binah*.

This added opportunity for the forces of evil to

insinuate themselves into our lives is reflected physically in the growth of white hair within the lesion. As we will see later,⁴¹ hair represents a highly attenuated flow of Divine energy—so attenuated that the forces of evil are allowed to tap it. For this reason, hair must normally be kept short, in order to prevent the forces of evil from siphoning off more than the minimal Divine energy that they are allocated for their continued existence.

In order to restore the flow of *chochmah* to *binah*, the individual must be presented to a priest, who represents *chesed*, which is derived from *chochmah* (both *sefirot* being on the right axis of the sefirotic tree). The priest then quarantines him for seven days, in order to allow the seven lower sub-*sefirot* of *chochmah* to re-enter *binah* (for it is always the seven lower sub-*sefirot* of a higher *partzuf* that become vested within a lower *partzuf*), imparting to it its inherent sense of self-nullification before God.⁴²

35. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 1:6. 36. *Ibid.*, 2:6. 37. *Gur Aryeh* on v. 4, below; *Kesef Mishneh* on *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 1:6. 38. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 10:11-12. 39. Below, 15:4-12. 40. *Yoma* 72b. 41. On Numbers 6:5. 42. *Likutei Torah* 2:23b, 24a, 24c ff; *BeSha'ah sheHikdimu* 5672, vol. 1, p. 370; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5714-5716, p. 511.

— ONKELOS —

4 ואם בהרא חורא היא במשך
בסרה ועמיק לית מחזקא מן
משכא ושערה לא אתהפך
למחור ויסגר כהנא ית מכתשא
שבטא יומין: 5 ויחונה כהנא
ביומא שביעאה והא מכתשא
קם כד הוה לא אוסף מכתשא
במשכא ויסגרנה כהנא שבטא
יומין תניגות:

4 ואם-בהרת לְבָנָה הוּא בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ וְעַמֶּק אֵין-מֵרָאָה
מִן-הָעוֹר וְשַׁעְרָה לֹא-יִהְיֶה לָבֵן וְהַסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַנֶּגַע
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: 5 וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהִנֵּה הַנֶּגַע
עָמַד בְּעֵינָיו לֹא-פָשָׂה הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְהַסְגִּירוֹ הַכֹּהֵן שִׁבְעַת
יָמִים שְׁנִית:

— RASHI —

עליו: 5 בעיניו. במראהו ובשעורו הראשון: והסגירו
שנית. הא אם פשה בשבוע ראשון, טמא מחלט:

4 ועמק אין מראה. לא ידעתי פרושו: והסגיר. יסגירונו
בבית אחד, ולא יראה עד סוף השבוע, ויכחו סימנים

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sitating the demolition of his house, the burning of his clothes, or his banishment from the community until he repents.

In this context, the sin of gossip for which *tzara'at* is the corrective punishment can be seen to be a superfluity of what could have (and should have) been good—or even holy—but instead degenerated into the opposite: We are all acutely aware of how powerful our speech is in forging social ties and promoting peace, and whether we are conscious of it or not, this is why we relish social conversation, clarifying issues with each other until we reach mutual understanding. When, however, a hidden drop of residual haughtiness insists that our reputation or esteem take precedence over the advancement of social harmony, some gossip or slander is inadvertently released in the heady excitement of conversation.

This explains why the Messiah is referred to as being afflicted with *tzara'at*.⁶² The messianic Redemption, the ultimate exodus from Egypt, will be characterized by a complete release from all limitations that nowadays constrict the revelation of holiness and Divine consciousness, similar to the overabundance of holiness manifest in the symptoms of *tzara'at*.⁶³

For only they are authorized to pronounce someone or something defiled: As we just pointed out, it is the priest's pronouncement—rather than the appearance of qualifying symptoms per se—that render the person ritually defiled. This fact puts considerable onus on the priest, especially in light of the consequences of his pronouncement: the ritually defiled individual must be banished from society, even from the company of other ritually defiled people. This total ostracism is not required in the case of any other type of defilement.

The Torah therefore specifically requires a priest to

make this pronouncement. The priests are all descendants (and therefore spiritual heirs) of Aaron, whom we have seen⁶⁴ (and will see further⁶⁵) both embodied the ideal of brotherly love and promoted brotherly love among the people. God therefore refers to the priests as His men of loving-kindness⁶⁶ and grants them the privilege of blessing His people daily.⁶⁷ Moreover, the blessing tradition requires them to recite before pronouncing this blessing is “Blessed are You, God, our God, He who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron and commanded us to bless His people, Israel, *with love*.”⁶⁸

Imbued with this love for their compatriots, the priests—while remaining objectively true to the Torah's directives for determining if a given outbreak of symptoms renders the sufferer defiled or not—will make all efforts to ensure that the law indeed requires them to pronounce the sufferer defiled before doing so. Furthermore, their inherent love for their fellows will compel them to do whatever it takes to declare them undefiled at the earliest possible opportunity.

The lesson for us here is that when we encounter someone whose behavior makes us judge him to be unfit to be included with us or befriended by us, we should not rush to declare him so. Rather, we should first examine ourselves in order to determine how well we exemplify the ideals of brotherly love. If we are in any way lacking in this regard—if we are not a “priest, a descendant of Aaron”—we have no right to pass such judgment, for it could well be that our perception is skewed by our unrefined sentiments rather than grounded solidly in the objective laws of the Torah.

Moreover, anyone who is less than a “priest”—an embodiment of brotherly love—is not qualified to ostracize another Jew, and if he presumes to do so, his pronouncement is no less than an outright

62. See Overview to *parashat Metzora*. 63. *Likutei Torah* 2:22b, 25b; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 37, pp. 33-36; *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 2, pp. 492-494. 64. On 9:1, 10:16, and 11:2-3, above. 65. Numbers 20:29; on Deuteronomy 34:8. 66. Deuteronomy 33:8. 67. Numbers 6:23-27; Deuteronomy 10:8, 28:5. 68. *Sotah* 39a.

4 These are the rules regarding spreading: **If the lesion on the skin of his flesh is a snow-white or lime-white spot**, whose appearance is deeper than that of the unaffected skin, or a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, **whose appearance is not deeper than that of the unaffected skin, but no previously dark hairs have turned white** since the appearance of the lesion and there is no patch of healthy skin within the lesion (as will be described presently⁴⁷), **then the priest must quarantine the person with the lesion in a separate house for seven days**, during which the priest must not see him, in order that the priest be able afterward to discern whether the lesion has spread during this time.⁴⁸

The quarantined individual is considered ritually defiled to the same extent as someone who has been conclusively diagnosed as afflicted with *tzara'at*.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, he is not to be banished from the camp (or later, after we will be organized into three concentric camps,⁵⁰ from all three camps), as is someone who has been conclusively diagnosed, as will be discussed later.⁵¹

5 **On the seventh day, the priest must examine him. If (a) the lesion has remained the same in its appearance, i.e., color, and (b) the lesion has not grown and spread on the skin, and (c) no previously dark hairs within it have turned white, and**⁵² **(d) no patch of healthy flesh has appeared within it (as will be described presently), the priest must quarantine him for seven days a second time.** If, however, the lesion spread, covering more (but not all⁵³) of his body; or previously dark hairs within it turned white; or a patch of healthy flesh appeared within it; the priest must pronounce him defiled.⁵⁴ In contrast, if the lesion either shrunk⁵⁵ or became darker⁵⁶ to the extent that it no longer qualifies as one of the four types of white spots mentioned above, the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement and he must undergo the purification process that will be detailed later.⁵⁷

The seventh day of the first quarantine week also counts as the first day of the second quarantine week.⁵⁸

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indicate a possible outbreak of *tzara'at* is white, which is a symbol of purity and innocence.⁵⁹ This indicates that the appearance of the symptoms of *tzara'at* is in fact a manifestation of sublime levels of spiritual energy ("lights"). Whenever such sublime "lights" well up, overflowing their accompanying media of transmission ("vessels"), the result is a supra-natural manifestation of Divine energy, which must be managed carefully in order to avoid possibly detrimental repercussions.

In terms of human experience, the symptoms of *tzara'at* result from an upwelling of holy rapture (*ratzo*) that is not mitigated by a concomitant sense of humble devotion to our Divine mission (*shov*). We have seen this phenomenon before, in the un-

authorized incense offering of Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu,⁶⁰ which is possibly why the Torah discusses the laws of *tzara'at* immediately after the account of their offering, even before continuing with its narrative of the events of that day.⁶¹

If the individual upon whose body, clothes, or house the symptoms of *tzara'at* appear does properly manage his Divine rapture, taking care to balance it with humble devotion to God's will, he will not be pronounced defiled; his symptoms are indications of exceptional holiness rather than of defilement. Only if he persists in his "antisocial" behavior of preferring to bask in God's presence rather than elevating the world in order to make it into God's home is he pronounced defiled, neces-

47. Vv. 10-16. 48. *Da'at Zekeinim* (Ba'alei HaTosefot) on this verse. 49. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 10:7-12. 50. Numbers 1:51-2:34; see also Deuteronomy 12:5-18. 51. V. 46. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 18, p. 135, note 31. 52. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:10-11. 53. Below, vv. 12-13. 54. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:5. 55. *Ibid.*, 3:5. 56. *Ibid.*, 1:11. 57. 14:1-32. 58. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 9:9. 59. See Isaiah 1:18. 60. Above, 10:1-7, and comments *ad loc.* 61. See 16:1, below.

— ONKELOS —

6 וַיְחַזֵּק כְּהֵנָּה יְתֵדָה בְּיוֹמָא שְׁבִיעָאָה תְּנִינֹת וְהָא עָמָא מִכְתָּשָׁא וְלֹא אוֹסֵף מִכְתָּשָׁא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וַיִּדְבְּנָה כְּהֵנָּה עֲדִיתָא הִיא וַיִּצְבַּע לְבוּשֹׁהִי וַיִּדְבְּכִי: 7 וְאִם אוֹסֵפָא תוֹסֵף עֲדִיתָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא בְּתֵר דְּאִתְחַזִּי לְכְּהֵנָּה לְדִבְרֹתָהּ וַיִּתְחַזִּי תְּנִינֹת לְכְּהֵנָּה: 8 וַיְחַזֵּק כְּהֵנָּה וְהָא אוֹסֵיפִת עֲדִיתָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וַיִּסְאֲבֵנָה כְּהֵנָּה סְגִירוּתָא הִיא: 9 מִכְתָּש סְגִירוּ אָרִי תְּהִי בְּאִנְשָׁא וַיִּתְּמִי לֹת כְּהֵנָּה: 10 וַיְחַזֵּק כְּהֵנָּה וְהָא עֲמָקָא הִירָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וְהִיא הִפְכַת שַׁעַר לְמַחֲוֹר וְרִשָּׁם בְּשָׂרָא הִיא בְּעַמִּיקָתָא: 11 סְגִירוּת עֲתִיקָא הִיא בְּמִשְׁךָ בִּסְרָה וַיִּסְאֲבֵנָה כְּהֵנָּה לֹא יִסְגְּרָהּ אָרִי מִסְאָב הוּא: 12 וְאִם מִסְגָּא תִּסְגִּי סְגִירוּתָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וְתַחֲפִי סְגִירוּתָא יֵת כָּל מִשְׁךָ מִכְתָּשָׁא מִרִישָׁה וְעַד רְגֻלוּהִי לְכָל חֻזּוֹ עֵינֵי כְּהֵנָּה:

◆ שני 6 וַיְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֹתוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שְ�נִיתָ וְהִנֵּה כִּהָּה הִנֵּנֶע וְלֹא־פִשָּׁה הִנֵּנֶע בָּעוֹר וַיִּמָּהְרוּ הַכֹּהֵן מִסִּפְּחַת הוּא וְכַבֵּם בְּגִדָיו וַיִּמָּהְרוּ: 7 וְאִם־פִּשָּׁה תִּפְשָׁה הַמִּסִּפְּחַת בָּעוֹר אַחֲרָי הִרְאֵתוּ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן לְמַהֲרָתוֹ וַיִּרְאָה שְ�נִית אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 8 וַיְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה פִשְׁתָּה הַמִּסִּפְּחַת בָּעוֹר וַיִּמָּהְרוּ הַכֹּהֵן צָרַעַת הוּא: פ

9 נִנְעֶע צָרַעַת כִּי תִהְיֶה בְּאֶדָם וְהוּבָא אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 10 וַיְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה שְׂאֵת־לְבָנָה בָּעוֹר וְהִיא הִפְכָּה שַׁעַר לָבָן וּמַחֲיִת בְּשָׂר הִי בִשְׂאֵת: 11 צָרַעַת נוֹשֶׁנֶת הוּא בָּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ וַיִּמָּהְרוּ הַכֹּהֵן לֹא יִסְגְּרֻנּוּ כִּי טָמֵא הוּא: 12 וְאִם־פְּרוּחַ תִּפְרַח הַצָּרַעַת בָּעוֹר וְכִסְתָּהּ הַצָּרַעַת אֶת כָּל־עוֹר הִנֵּנֶע מִרְאֵשׁוֹ וְעַד־רַגְלָיו לְכָל־מְרָאָה עֵינֵי הַכֹּהֵן:

— RASHI —

בְּשָׂר, אֵף הוּא סִימֵן טָמְאָה, שַׁעַר לָבָן בְּלֹא מַחֲיָה וּמַחֲיָה בְּלֹא שַׁעַר לָבָן. וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׂאֵת נִאֲמָרָה מַחֲיָה אֵלָּא בִּשְׂאֵת, אֵף בְּכָל הַמְּרָאוֹת וְתוֹלְדוֹתֵיהֶן הוּא סִימֵן טָמְאָה: 11 צָרַעַת נוֹשֶׁנֶת הִיא. מִכָּה יִשְׁנָה הִיא תַּחַת הַמַּחֲיָה, וְחִבּוּרָהּ זֶה נִרְאִית בְּרִיָּאָה מְלֻמְעָלָה, וְתַחֲתֶיהָ מְלָאָה לָחָה, שְׂאֵת תֹּאמַר: הוּאֵיל וְעַלְתָּה מַחֲיָה — אֶטְהַרְנָה: 12 מִרְאֵשׁוֹ. שֶׁל אֶדָם וְעַד רַגְלָיו: לְכָל מְרָאָה עֵינֵי הַכֹּהֵן. פָּרֵט לְכֹהֵן שֶׁחֹשֶׁךְ מְאֹד:

6 כִּהָּה. הִכְהֶה מִרְאֵתוֹ. הָא, אִם עֹמֵד בְּמִרְאֵתוֹ, אוֹ פִּשָּׁה — טָמֵא: מִסִּפְּחַת. שֶׁם נִנְעֶע טְהוֹר: וְכַבֵּם בְּגִדָיו וַיִּמָּהְרוּ. הוּאֵיל וְנִזְקֵק לְהַסְגֵּר, נִקְרָא טָמֵא וְצָרִיף טְבִילָה: 8 וַיִּמָּהְרוּ הַכֹּהֵן. וּמִשְׁטָמְאוֹ הָרִי הוּא מְחֻלָּט, וְנִזְקֵק לְצַפְּרִים וּלְתַגְלִיחַת וּלְקִרְבֵּן הָאֲמֹר בְּפִרְשֵׁת "זֹאת תִּהְיֶה": צָרַעַת הוּא. הַמִּסִּפְּחַת הַזֹּאת: צָרַעַת. לְשׁוֹן נִקְבָּה. "נִנְעֶע" — לְשׁוֹן זָכָר: 10 וּמַחֲיָה. שִׁינִימִינִי"ט בְּלַעֲזִי, שְׁנֵהֶפֶךְ מִקְצֵת הַלָּבָן שֶׁבְתוֹף הַשְּׂאֵת לְמִרְאָה

7. הַחֲלֻמָּה, רַפּוּי.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

lie, for as stated, it is only the pronouncement of the priest that renders the individual defiled (and therefore subject to exclusion from society), not the symptoms themselves.

It thus follows that someone who utters such an unauthorized judgment has slandered his fellow, which, as we have seen,⁸⁰ results in *him* being afflicted with *tzara'at*, rather than the person he sought to stigmatize. Therefore, in order to purify himself

of this defilement, the judgmental person should isolate himself from social contact until he trains himself to see only the positive in his compatriots.

By learning how to love our fellows "unwarrantedly"—i.e., positively, regardless of their objective behavior—we counteract the cause of our present exile, unwarranted hatred. Thereby, we hasten the advent of the final, messianic Redemption.⁸¹

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[10] **The size of a lentil bean:** This area is equivalent to the average square area covered by 4 hairs (2 hairs by 2 hairs) as they grow naturally

on the body.⁸² The modern-day equivalent is 17.11 mm² or 0.026 in².

80. Above, v. 2. See also "Inner Dimensions" on 14:2, below. 81. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 88-91. 82. *Negaim* 4:5; *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 3:1.

◆ **Second Reading 6** After his second quarantine-week, **the priest must examine him on the seventh** (i.e., 13th) **day a second time**. If the lesion's color has not become darker; or it has spread, covering more (but not all⁶⁹) of his body; or previously dark hairs within it have turned white; or a patch of healthy flesh has appeared within it; it is *tzara'at*, and the priest must pronounce him defiled. If, however, no previously dark hairs have turned white, no patch of healthy flesh has appeared, **the lesion has become darker** than it was before this quarantine—even though it has not darkened to the extent that it no longer exhibits one of the four degrees of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*⁷⁰—**and the lesion has not spread on the skin, the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement**, for it is now clear that this lesion is not a case of *tzara'at*: **it has become** a different condition, termed *mispachat*, which does not cause defilement; no third quarantine period is needed.⁷¹ **He must immerse** himself⁷² and **his garments** in a *mikveh* and undergo the rest of the purification process that will be described later,⁷³ **and then he will be rid of this defilement** in fact.

7 If the *mispachat* spreads on the skin sometime after the person was shown to the priest for his purification on the 13th day, **he must be shown to the priest again**.

8 The priest must examine the *mispachat*. If the *mispachat* has spread on the skin since the previous examination, **the priest must pronounce him defiled**, for it is no longer *mispachat*; **it has turned into *tzara'at***.

9 The following are the rules⁷⁴ regarding the third indication of *tzara'at*, the appearance of healthy flesh within the lesion: As was stated previously,⁷⁵ **if a person has a white lesion** that appears to be *tzara'at*, due to its falling into one of the four categories of whiteness mentioned above, **he must be brought to the priest**.

10 The priest must examine it. If there is on the skin a wool-white spot or any of the other three types of white lesions that can develop into *tzara'at*, **and either** (a), as stated previously,⁷⁶ **it has turned** at least two of the formerly dark hairs within it **white, or** (b) **there is in the wool-white spot** (or other type of lesion) a contiguous⁷⁷ patch of **healthy, live flesh** at least the size of a lentil bean and enclosed completely within the lesion,⁷⁸ then,

11 in the case of the appearance of healthy flesh, you should not be deceived into thinking that this is a sign that the *tzara'at* is healing; rather, **it is** a case of **old, purulent *tzara'at* remaining under the new, healthy skin of his flesh**. Both in this case and in the case of newly white hairs, **the priest must pronounce him defiled. He need not quarantine him, because he is definitely defiled**.

12 As we have seen, the spreading of a lesion indicates that it is *tzara'at*. If, however, **the *tzara'at* erupts all over the skin** to the extent **that the *tzara'at* covers all the skin of the person with the lesion, from his head to his feet, wherever the eyes of the priest can see it**—meaning that the *tzara'at* need not appear on interior skin (such as that inside the nose or mouth) that is not readily visible during an external examination⁷⁹—then

69. Below, vv. 12-13. 70. Nachmanides on this verse; Mizrahi on the preceding verse; Rabbeinu Asher and Rabbeinu Shimshon of Sens on *Negaim* 1:3. 71. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:10. 72. *Ibid.*, 11:1. 73. 14:1-32. 74. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 77-81. 75. V. 2. 76. V. 3. 77. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 3:4. 78. *Ibid.*, 3:1. 79. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 84-85.

— ONKELOS —

13 וַיִּחַזֵּי כְהֵנָּה וְהָא חֶפֶת סְגִירוֹתָא
יֵת כָּל בְּסָרָה וִידְכִי יֵת מִכְתָּשָׁא
כְּלָה אֲתֵהֲפִיף לְמַחֲוֹר דְּכִי הוּא:
14 וּבִיוֹמָא דִּיתְחַזִּי בֵּה בְּסָרָא חֵיָא
יְהִי מְסָאָב: 15 וַיִּחַזֵּי כְהֵנָּה יֵת
בְּסָרָא חֵיָא וִיסָאבְנָה בְּסָרָא חֵיָא
מְסָאָב הוּא סְגִירוֹתָא הוּא: 16 אֹ
אָרִי יְתוּב בְּסָרָא חֵיָא וִיתְהֲפִיף
לְמַחֲוֹר וַיִּתִּי לֹות כְּהֵנָּה: 17 וַיִּחַזְּנָה
כְּהֵנָּה וְהָא אֲתֵהֲפִיף מִכְתָּשָׁא
לְמַחֲוֹר וִידְכִי כְהֵנָּה יֵת מִכְתָּשָׁא
דְּכִי הוּא: 18 וְאָנֹשׁ אָרִי יְהִי בֵּה
בְּמִשְׁכְּבָה שְׁחָנָא וְאֵתְסִי:

13 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה כִסְתָּה הַצֵּרַעַת אֶת־כָּל־בֶּשָׂרוֹ
וַטְהַר אֶת־הַנֶּגַע כֻּלּוֹ הַפֶּךָ לִבָּן טָהוֹר הוּא: 14 וּבַיּוֹם
הָרִאשׁוֹת בּוֹ בֶּשֶׂר חַי וְטָמֵא: 15 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַבֶּשֶׂר
הַחַי וְטָמֵאֹ הַבֶּשֶׂר הַחַי טָמֵא הוּא צִרַעַת הוּא: 16 אֹ כִי
יָשׁוּב הַבֶּשֶׂר הַחַי וְנִהְפָּךְ לְלִבָּן וְכֵן אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 17 וְרָאָהּ
הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה נִהְפָּךְ הַנֶּגַע לְלִבָּן וַטְהַר אֶת־הַנֶּגַע
טָהוֹר הוּא: פ

◆ שלישי 18 וּבֶשֶׂר בִּי־יְהִיָּה בּוֹ־בַעֲרוֹ שְׁחִין וְנִרְפָּא:

— RASHI —

בו, וַיֵּשׁ יוֹם שְׁאִין אֶתְהָ רוֹאָה בו. מִכָּאן אָמְרוּ: חֲתָן
נוֹתֵנִין לוֹ כָּל שְׁבַעַת יְמֵי הַמִּשְׁתָּה, לוֹ וְלֹא־צִטְלִיתוֹ
וְלִכְסוּתוֹ וְלִבִּיתוֹ, וְכֵן בְּרָגֶל, נוֹתֵנִין לוֹ כָּל יְמֵי הָרָגֶל:
15 צִרַעַת הוּא. הַבֶּשֶׂר הַזֶּה. "בֶּשֶׂר" לְשׁוֹן זָכָר:
18 שְׁחִין. לְשׁוֹן חֲמוּם, שֶׁנִּתְחַמֵּם הַבֶּשֶׂר בְּלִקְוֵי הַבָּא
לוֹ מִחֲמַת מִכָּה, שֶׁלֹּא מִחֲמַת הָאוּר: וְנִרְפָּא. הַשְׁחִין
הַעֲלָה אֲרוּכָה, וּבִמְקוֹמוֹ עָלָה נֶגַע אַחֵר:

14 וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹת בּוֹ בֶּשֶׂר חַי. אִם צִמְחָה בו מַחֲיָה,
הָרִי כְּבֵר פָּרַשׁ שֶׁהַמַּחֲיָה סִימָן טָמֵא? אֵלָּא, הָרִי
שֶׁהִיָּה הַנֶּגַע בְּאֶחָד מֵעֲשָׂרִים וְאַרְבָּעָה רָאשֵׁי אֲבָרִים
שְׁאִין מְטַמְּאִין מִשׁוּם מַחֲיָה, לְפִי שְׁאִין נִרְאָה הַנֶּגַע
כֻּלּוֹ בְּאֶחָד, שֶׁשׁוּפָע אֵילָף וְאֵילָף, וְהוּר רֹאשׁ הָאֶבֶר
וְנִתְגַּלָּה שְׁפּוּעוֹ עַל יְדֵי שְׁמֹן, כְּגוֹן שֶׁהִבְרִיא וְנִעֲשָׂה
רָחֵב וְנִרְאִית בּוֹ הַמַּחֲיָה, לְמַדְּנוּ הַכָּתוּב שֶׁתִּטְמָא:
וּבַיּוֹם. מֵהַ תִּלְמוּד לִזְמַר? לְלִמֹּד, יֵשׁ יוֹם שֶׁאֵתְהָ רוֹאָה

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sake, as it were, fulfilling the verse, "For My own sake, for My own sake I will do this, for how can I let My Name be profaned?"⁹⁰

- Positively, i.e., that the truth of the Torah will become so self-evident that it will be universally acknowledged that any government that does not submit to the Torah's rules is "heretical," i.e., based on the delusion that it is possible to create a just and moral society any other way. Accordingly, the Jewish people will be esteemed as the preservers of the Torah's message of true monotheism. In this enlightened condition, the Messiah's imminent arrival will be a natural outgrowth of the world's desire for moral perfection. God will not have to "impose" the redemption on the world.

Inasmuch as the sages cite the law given in this verse as support for their sign, it follows that the two ways of understanding their sign parallel the two ways of understanding this law, namely:

- Negatively: The spread of *tzara'at* over the entire body does not intrinsically indicate that the person is undefiled; the fact that it does so is simply another one of the Torah's rules that are not grounded in logic or reason, just like the rest of

the laws governing *tzara'at*. The Torah here "imposes" its will on reality, irrespective of natural causes or processes.

This, indeed, is the position adopted by Jewish legal (i.e., halachic) exegesis, which therefore limits this rule to the case stated specifically in this verse: when *tzara'at* spreads out from a lesion that had been pronounced defiled or suspected of being so. In contrast, when *tzara'at* spreads over the entire body from the outset or from a lesion that was pronounced undefiled, the person must be declared defiled.⁹¹

- Positively: The spread of *tzara'at* over the entire body indicates that it is the natural condition of the person's skin; this is why it does not render the person defiled. This is the position that Rashi adopts as the contextual understanding of this passage, according to which it makes no difference under what circumstances the spread occurs—in all cases it indicates that the person is undefiled.

Clearly, it is preferable that redemption occur the second way, obviating the need for universal moral degeneration and the forceful imposition of God's will on an antagonistic world. The Torah therefore promises that prior to the Redemption, the Jewish

90. Isaiah 48:11; see *Sanhedrin* 98a. 91. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at*, ch. 7.

13 the priest must examine it. If the *tzara'at* has indeed covered all his flesh, he must pronounce the person with the lesion rid of this defilement. The fact that **he has turned completely white** indicates that this lesion is not an anomaly but the natural condition of his body; therefore, **he is not defiled.**⁸³

14 Returning to the laws regarding healthy flesh that appears within a *tzara'at*-lesion: It was stated previously that the appearance of such a patch renders the individual defiled.⁸⁴ The exception is a patch of healthy flesh that appears on the tip of a finger, toe, ear lobe, the nose, or the male reproductive organ. Such a patch does not render the person defiled, because it is impossible for the priest to see both sides of these body parts at once, and therefore he cannot see the entire lesion at once in order to render a decision on it. If, however, the body part later becomes fat, thereby spreading out the tip of the limb such that it is possible to see the entire lesion (and the entire patch of healthy flesh on it) at once, then, **on the day that a patch of live flesh at least the size of a lentil bean⁸⁵ appears in it, he will become defiled.**

15 Therefore, he must be shown to the priest, and **the priest must examine the healthy, live flesh, and must pronounce him defiled.** The appearance of live flesh indicates that the person is defiled; the lesion is *tzara'at*.

16 But if the healthy, live flesh once again turns white, he must come to the priest 17 and the priest must reexamine him. If the lesion has indeed turned totally white again, the priest must pronounce the lesion undefiled. The person will thus be rid of this defilement.

Tzara'at that Develops out of an Inflammation

- ◆ **Third Reading 18** If *tzara'at* develops out of a partially healed inflammation, the rules of diagnosis differ slightly from those that apply when it develops out of a white spot (see Figure 3, page 97), as follows:

This type of *tzara'at* can only develop **on a person's flesh if there is an inflammation** (i.e., a localized heating resulting from the infection) **of its skin** due to a blow or disease,⁸⁶ **and the inflammation heals** enough to form a membrane. (In contrast, a fully healed inflammation is considered normal skin—even if it leaves scar tissue⁸⁷—on which *tzara'at* can only develop out of a white lesion,⁸⁸ as described above.)

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13 If the *tzara'at* has covered all his flesh: One of the signs given by the sages that the Messiah's arrival is imminent is that "the entire government has become heretical, with none to rebuke them." This notion, they say, is alluded to in the law that if *tzara'at* covers the entire body, the person is undefiled.⁸⁹ There are two ways of understanding this sign given by the sages:

- Negatively, i.e., that heresy will infect all the world's governments. None of them will acknowledge God as Master of the world and its lawgiver, promoting instead licentiousness and barbaric behavior. In this entrenched, depraved condition, the Messiah is the world's only hope; it is therefore a sign of his imminent arrival. But since the world will not be worthy of redemption, God will redeem it "by force" —for His own

83. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 77-81. 84. Vv. 9-11, above. 85. Above, v. 10. 86. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 5:1. 87. *Ibid.*, 5:3-4. 88. *Ibid.*, 5:3. 89. *Sanhedrin* 97a.

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19 ויהי באתר שחנא עמקא חורא או בהרא חורא סמקא ויתחזי לכהנא: 20 ויחזי כהנא והא מחזא מביד מן משכא ושערה אתהפיד למחור ויסאבנה כהנא מכתש סגירותא היא בשחנא סגיתא: 21 ואם יחזנה כהנא והא לית בה שער חור ומכיקא ליתא מן משכא והיא עמא ויסגרנה כהנא שבקא יומי: 22 ואם אוספא תוסף במשכא ויסאב כהנא יתה מכתשא היא: 23 ואם באתרהא קמת בהרתא לא אוסיפת רשם שחנא היא וידכנה כהנא: 24 או אנש ארי יהי במשכה כנאה דנור ותהי רשם כנאה בהרא חורא סמקא או חורא:

19 והיה במקום השחין שאת לבנה או בהרת לבנה אדמדמת ונראה אלהיה: 20 וראה הכהן והנה מראה שפל מן העור ושערה הפך לבן וטמאו הכהן נגע צרעת הוא בשחין פרחא: 21 ואם יראנה הכהן והנה אין בו שער לבן ושפלה איננה מן העור והיא כהה והסגירו הכהן שבעת ימים: 22 ואם פשה תפשה בעור וטמא הכהן אותו נגע הוא: 23 ואם תחיתיה תעמוד בהרת לא פשתה צרבת השחין הוא וטהרו הכהן: 8 רביעי (שני במחזורין) 24 או בשר בידיה בערו מכות אש והיתה מחית המכה בהרת לבנה אדמדמת או לבנה:

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לשון רגיעת עור הנגע מחמת חמום, כמו: "ונצרב ביה כל פנים". ריטרייר"א בלעז: צרבת. ריטריימינ"ט בלעז: 24 מחית המכה. שיינימינ"ט בלעז. כשחיתיה המכה, נהפכה לבהרת פתוכה, או לבנה חלקה. וסימני מכה וסימני שחין שונים הם, ולמה חלקן הכתוב? לומר, שאין מצטרפין זה עם זה — נולד חצי גריס בשחין וחצי גריס במכה, לא ידונו כגריס:

19 או בהרת לבנה אדמדמת. שאין הנגע לבן חלק, אלא פתוף ומערב בשני מראות, לבן ואדום: 20 מראה שפל. ואין ממשוה שפל, אלא מתוף לבנינותו הוא נראה שפל ועמק, כמראה חמה עמקה מן הצל: 22 נגע הוא. השאת הזאת או הבהרת: 23 תחיתיה. במקומה: צרבת השחין. כתרגומו: "רשם שחנא" — אינו אלא רשם החמום הנפר בבשר. כל "צרבת"

8. מועד קטן ז, ב. 9. יחזקאל כא, ג. 10. לבן. 11. כוץ. 12. החלקה, רפוי.

a snow-white spot or one of the three other types of white spots that can develop into *tzara'at*, and the spot is either white with red streaks—but not so many red streaks that the spot loses its white appearance¹⁰⁰—or uniformly white,

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people will indeed repent fully, of their own accord, and on their own initiative, thereby ushering in the Redemption.¹⁰¹ This repentance need not be evinced by a wholesale return to full Jewish observance, for that revival will be one of the Messiah's first accomplishments.¹⁰² Rather, this repentance consists of the sincere dissatisfaction with the present state of reality—accompanied by the resolution to change it—that we have all experienced numerous times throughout our lives.¹⁰³

It is therefore imperative that the Jewish people encourage the nations of the world to fulfill the commandments that the Torah obligates them to observe. By acknowledging the Torah as the sole possible basis for true ethical behavior and moral justice, the non-Jewish world will appreciate the Jewish people as the vanguards of world justice, morality, and peace. This will pave the way for the ultimate, messianic Redemption.¹⁰⁴

100. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 1:4. 101. Deuteronomy 30:2; *Mishneh Torah*, *Teshuvah* 7:5; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 215-216. 102. *Mishneh Torah*, *Melachim* 11:4. 103. *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 1, p. 232, vol. 2, p. 692; *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 2, p. 451. 104. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 77-83.

19 If, in the location of the partially healed inflammation, there is left one of the four white spots that can develop into *tzara'at*, i.e., either a **wool-white spot**, an egg-membrane-white-spot, a **snow-white spot**, or a lime-white spot, and the spot is either uniformly white or white **with red streaks**—but not so many red streaks that the spot loses its white appearance⁹²—**he must be shown to the priest.**⁹³

20 **The priest must examine him. If its appearance is**, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, **lower than** that of the **skin** (due to its shininess), or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, not any lower than that of the skin (due to its dullness), **and** at least two of **its** originally dark **hairs have turned white, the priest must pronounce him defiled**, for the transmutation of dark hairs into white indicates that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion that has erupted on the inflammation.

21 **But if**, when the priest examines it, **it does not contain** newly **white hair**, and its appearance is, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, lower than that of the skin, or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, **not any lower than** that of the **skin** because **it is darker** than a snow-white or lime-white spot, **the priest must quarantine him for seven days.**

22 **If**, when the priest examines him at the end of the quarantine week, he sees that **it has spread on the skin**—covering more (but not all) of the body—or at least two of its previously dark hairs have turned white, **the priest must pronounce him defiled**, for it is now clear that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion.

23 **If the snow-white spot** or other spot **remained the same size, not having spread**, and it became darker than it was before⁹⁴ (even though it has not darkened to the extent that it no longer exhibits one of the four degrees of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*⁹⁵), **it is only the scar tissue of the inflammation, and the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement.** No second week of quarantine is required.

Unlike lesions that develop on healthy skin, the appearance of healthy flesh within a lesion that develops on an inflammation does not indicate defilement.

Tzara'at that Develops out of a Burn

- ◆ *Fourth Reading (Second when combined)* 24 If *tzara'at* develops out of a partially healed burn, the rules of diagnosis are the same as when it develops out of an inflammation (see Figure 3, page 97):

This type of *tzara'at* can only develop on a person's **flesh if there is a burn on its skin** resulting from contact with **fire** or something hot,⁹⁶ **and the healed area of the burn** has begun to form a membrane. (In contrast, a fully healed burn is considered normal skin—even if it leaves scar tissue⁹⁷—on which *tzara'at* can only develop out of a white lesion,⁹⁸ as described above.⁹⁹) If such a partially healed burn turns into

⁹². *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:4. ⁹³. Vv. 1-17. ⁹⁴. Below, v. 28. ⁹⁵. Nachmanides v. 6, above; Mizrahi on v. 5, above; Rabbeinu Asher and Rabbeinu Shimshon of Sens on *Negaim* 1:3. ⁹⁶. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 5:1. ⁹⁷. *Ibid.*, 5:3-4. ⁹⁸. *Ibid.*, 5:3. ⁹⁹. Vv. 1-17.

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25 וַיִּחַזֵּי יְתֵה כְּהֵנָּא וְהָא אֲתֵהֲפִיךְ
שְׁעָרָא לְמַחֲוֹר בְּבִהְרֵתָא וּמְחֻזָּהָ
עֵמִיק מִן מִשְׁכָּא סְגִירוּתָא הִיא
בְּכוּזָה סְגִיאת וְיִסְאֵב יְתֵה כְּהֵנָּא
מִכְתֵּשׁ סְגִירוּתָא הִיא: 26 וְאִם
יִחְזֻנָּה כְּהֵנָּא וְהָא לִית בְּבִהְרֵתָא
שְׁעָר חֲזֹר וּמִכִּיכָא לִיתֵהָא מִן
מִשְׁכָּא וְהִיא עֵמִיק וְיִסְגֻנָּה כְּהֵנָּא
שְׁבָעָא יִמִּין: 27 וְיִחְזֻנָּה כְּהֵנָּא
בִּיּוֹמָא שְׁבִיעָאָה אִם אוֹסְפָא תוֹסֵף
בְּמִשְׁכָּא וְיִסְאֵב יְתֵה מִכְתֵּשׁ
סְגִירוּתָא הִיא: 28 וְאִם בְּאַתְרָהָא
קִמַּת בְּהֵרְתָא לֹא אוֹסִיפַת בְּמִשְׁכָּא
וְהִיא עֵמִיק עֵמִיק כְּוָזָה הִיא
וְיִכְנָה כְּהֵנָּא אֲרִי רֶשֶׁם כְּוָזָה
הִיא: 29 וְגִבֵּר אוֹ אֲתֵתָא אֲרִי
יְהִי בֹה מִכְתֵּשׁא בְּרִישׁ אוֹ בְּדִקּוּן:
30 וַיִּחַזֵּי כְּהֵנָּא יֵת מִכְתֵּשׁא וְהָא
מְחֻזָּהֵי עֵמִיק מִן מִשְׁכָּא וְכֹה שְׁעָר
סֻמָּךְ דְּעֵדֶךְ וְיִסְאֵב יְתֵה כְּהֵנָּא
נִתְקָא הוּא סְגִירוּת רִישָׁא אוֹ דְקָנָא
הוּא:

25 וְרָאָה אֶתֶּה הַכֹּהֵן וְהֵנָּה נִהְפֹךְ שֵׁעַר לִבָּן בְּבִהְרֵת
וּמִרְאֵה עֵמִיק מִן־הָעוֹר צָרַעַת הִוא בְּמִכּוֹה פְּרָחָה וּטְמֵא
אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן נִגַּע צָרַעַת הִוא: 26 וְאִם יִרְאֶנָּה הַכֹּהֵן וְהֵנָּה
אֵין־בְּבִהְרֵת שֵׁעַר לִבָּן וּשְׁפִלָּה אֵינָנָה מִן־הָעוֹר וְהוּא
כֹּהֵן וְהַסְגִּירוֹ הַכֹּהֵן שְׁבַעֶת יָמִים: 27 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן בַּיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי אִם־פָּשָׁה תִּפְשָׁה בָּעוֹר וּטְמֵא הַכֹּהֵן אֹתוֹ נִגַּע
צָרַעַת הִוא: 28 וְאִם־תַּחֲתִיָּה תַעֲמֹד הַבִּהְרֵת לֹא־פָשְׁתָּהּ
בָּעוֹר וְהוּא כֹּהֵן שְׂאֵת הַמִּכּוֹה הוּא וּטְהִירוֹ הַכֹּהֵן כִּי־
צָרַכְתָּ הַמִּכּוֹה הוּא: פ

◆ חמישי 29 וְאִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה כִּי־יִהְיֶה בּוֹ נִגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ אוֹ
בְּזָקָן: 30 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע וְהֵנָּה מִרְאֵהוּ עֵמִיק מִן־
הָעוֹר וְכֹה שֵׁעַר צָהָב דֶּק וּטְמֵא אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן נִתְקָא הוּא
צָרַעַת הָרֹאשׁ אוֹ הַזָּקָן הוּא:

— RASHI —

29 בְּרֹאשׁ אוֹ בְּזָקָן. בָּא הַכְּתוּב לְחַלֵּק בֵּין נִגַּע שְׁבַמְקוֹם שְׁעָר לְנִגַּע שְׁבַמְקוֹם בְּשָׂר, שְׂזָה סִימְנוֹ בְּשָׂעַר לִבָּן וְזֶה סִימְנוֹ בְּשָׂעַר צָהָב: 30 וְכֹה שֵׁעַר צָהָב.

the rules governing lesions appearing on the rest of the body, which were discussed previously.¹⁰⁹

If, regardless of whether¹¹⁰ its appearance is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin, there are at least two hairs inside it that are thin—i.e., shorter than the other hairs¹¹¹—and have turned from their natural color¹¹² into pale gold,¹¹³ the priest must pronounce him defiled, for it is a *netek*, which is the name¹¹⁴ of *tzara'at* of the head or the beard. If there is only one (or no) gold hair within the lesion, or if the gold hair is as long as the rest of the hair, or if within the lesion there are at least two naturally colored hairs remaining from before the lesion appeared (even if there are now also two or more gold hairs within the lesion),¹¹⁵ the person is not defiled.

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29 If a man or a woman has a lesion on the head or on the beard: As was noted above,¹¹⁶ the eruption of *tzara'at* on the head is caused by haughtiness, as opposed to *tzara'at* elsewhere on the body, which is the result of gossip or slander. The reason for this

difference is that gossip and slander are superficial misdeeds, as explained above,¹¹⁷ which therefore affect the skin elsewhere on the body, whereas haughtiness is a warped mental attitude, which therefore affects the head.¹¹⁸

108. Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at 5:11. 109. Above, vv. 1-17. 110. Sifra, Tazria, Negaim, parashah 5:4; Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at 8:1. 111. Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at 8:4. 112. Sifra, Tazria, Negaim, chapter 9:14. 113. Rashi on v. 37, below. 114. Likutei Sichot, vol. 27, p. 93, note 12. 115. Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at 8:6. 116. V. 2. 117. On v. 2. 118. Likutei Sichot, vol. 27, p. 99.

25 the priest must examine it. If at least two originally dark hairs in the snow-white or other spot have turned white, and the appearance is, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, deeper than that of the skin (due to its shininess), or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, not any deeper than that of the skin (due to its dullness), it is *tzara'at* that has spread in the burn. The priest must pronounce him defiled, for the transmutation of dark hairs into white indicates that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion.

26 But if, when the priest examines it, the snow-white spot or other spot does not contain newly white hair, and its appearance is, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, lower than that of the skin, or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, not any lower than that of the skin because it is paler than a snow-white or lime-white spot, the priest must quarantine him for seven days.

27 The priest must examine him on the seventh day. If the lesion has spread on the skin—covering more (but not all) of the body—or at least two of its previously dark hairs have turned white, the priest must pronounce him defiled, for it is then clear that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion.

28 If the snow-white spot or other spot remained the same size, not having spread on the skin, and it became darker than it was before (even though it has not darkened to the extent that it no longer exhibits one of the four degrees of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*¹⁰⁵)—such that, for example, in the case of an originally snow-white spot, it is now only a wool-white spot on the burn—the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement, because it is now clear that the lesion is only the scar tissue of the burn. No second week of quarantine is required.

Although the same diagnostic procedures apply both to potential *tzara'at*-lesions that develop out of an inflammation and those that develop out of a burn, they are still considered two distinct types of *tzara'at*: adjacent appearances of these two types of lesion do not combine to cover the requisite area to be considered problematic.

Tzara'at that Develops on the Head

- ◆ **Fifth Reading** **29** If a lesion appears on a part of the head that is usually covered with hair, the laws regarding how *tzara'at* can develop out of such a lesion differ from those governing how it can develop out of lesions elsewhere on the body (see Figure 4, p. 98).

If a man or a woman has a lesion of any color or combination of colors,¹⁰⁶ covering at least an area equivalent to a square each of whose sides is equal to the diameter of a Cilician bean [i.e., 154 mm² or 0.24 in²],¹⁰⁷ on the normally hairy part of the head or on the part of the head where the beard grows,

30 the priest must examine the lesion. If, however, a lesion occurs on a part of the head where no hair normally grows (e.g., a woman's chin) or where hair will normally grow but has not yet grown (e.g., a boy's chin),¹⁰⁸ it is diagnosed according to

¹⁰⁵. Nachmanides v. 6, above; Mizrahi on v. 5, above; Rabbeinu Asher and Rabbeinu Shimshon of Sens on *Negaim* 1:3. ¹⁰⁶. *Tosefta Negaim* 1:2; see *Tosefta Yom Tov* on *Negaim* 1:4, s.v. *Rabbi Dosa*. ¹⁰⁷. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:1. See above, v. 10.

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31 וְאִי־יֵרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־נֶגַע הַנֶּתֶק וְהֵנָּה אִי־מֵרָאֹהוּ עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעוֹר וְשַׁעַר שַׁחַר אֵין בּוֹ וְהַסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־נֶגַע הַנֶּתֶק שְׁבַעַת יָמִים: 32 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהֵנָּה לֹא־פִשָּׁה הַנֶּתֶק וְלֹא־הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר צָהָב וּמֵרָאֹה הַנֶּתֶק אֵין עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעוֹר: 33 וְהִתְגַּלָּח וְאֶת־הַנֶּתֶק לֹא יִגְלַח וְהַסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּתֶק שְׁבַעַת יָמִים שְׁנִית: 34 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּתֶק בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהֵנָּה לֹא־פִשָּׁה הַנֶּתֶק בָּעוֹר וּמֵרָאֹהוּ אֵינְנוּ עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעוֹר וְטָהַר אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן וּבָבֶם בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר: 35 וְאִם־פִּשָּׁה יִפְשָׁה הַנֶּתֶק בָּעוֹר אַחֲרֵי טָהֲרָתוֹ: 36 וְרָאֹהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְהֵנָּה פִּשָּׁה הַנֶּתֶק בָּעוֹר לֹא־יִבְקַר הַכֹּהֵן לְשַׁעַר הַצָּהָב טָמֵא הוּא: 37 וְאִם־בְּעֵינָיו עָמַד הַנֶּתֶק וְשַׁעַר שַׁחַר צָמַח־בּוֹ נִרְפָּא הַנֶּתֶק טָהוֹר הוּא וְטָהְרוּ הַכֹּהֵן: 38 וְאִישׁ אֹזֶאֱשָׁה כִּי־יִהְיֶה בָּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרָם בִּהְרֹת בִּהְרֹת לְבָנָת: 39 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהֵנָּה בָּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרָם בִּהְרֹת בִּהְרֹת לְבָנָת בִּהְרֹת הוּא פָּרַח בָּעוֹר טָהוֹר הוּא: 40

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37 וְשַׁעַר שַׁחַר אֵין בּוֹ. הָא אִם הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר שַׁחַר — טָהוֹר, וְאֵין צָרִיף לְהַסְגִּיר, שֶׁשַׁעַר שַׁחַר סִימָן טָהוֹר הוּא בְּנִתְקִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "וְשַׁעַר שַׁחַר צָמַח בּוֹ" וּגו': 32 וְהֵנָּה לֹא פִשָּׁה וּגו'. הָא אִם פִּשָּׁה, אִם הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר צָהָב — טָמֵא: 33 וְהִתְגַּלָּח. סְבִיבוֹת הַנֶּתֶק: וְאֶת־הַנֶּתֶק לֹא יִגְלַח. מְנִיחַ שְׁתֵּי שְׁעֵרוֹת סְמוּךְ לוֹ סְבִיב, כְּדִי שִׁיחָא נִכְר אִם פִּשָּׁה, שָׂאֵם יִפְשָׁה יַעֲבֹר הַשְּׁעֵרוֹת וַיֵּצֵא לְמָקוֹם הַגָּלוּחַ: 35 אַחֲרֵי טָהֲרָתוֹ. אֵין לִי אֶלָּא פּוֹשָׁה לְאַחַר הַפְּטוֹר, מִנֵּין אֶף בְּסוֹף שְׁבוּעָה רֵאשׁוֹן וּבְסוֹף שְׁבוּעָה שְׁנִי תִלְמוּד לֹמַר: "פִּשָּׁה יִפְשָׁה":

13. פסוק לו. 14. צִהְבָּה. 15. אֲדָמוּי.

that can develop into *tzara'at*, i.e., **white spots**,

39 the priest must examine them. If there are dark white spots on the skin of their flesh, i.e., darker than any of the previously described four grades of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*, **it is nothing more than a lack of pigmentation that has erupted on the skin. He or she is not defiled**, even if symptoms characteristic of *tzara'at* later develop within these spots.

31 But if the priest examines the *netek*-lesion, and, regardless of whether its appearance is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin, there are not two black hairs—or hairs of any other color, including gold—in it, the priest must quarantine the person with the *netek*-lesion for seven days.

32 The priest must examine the lesion on the seventh day. If the *netek* has shrunk to less than the symptomatic area or naturally colored hair has appeared within it, the person is no longer defiled; the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement, and he must undergo the purification process that will be detailed later.¹¹⁹ If the *netek* has spread¹²⁰ and there is no naturally colored hair in its new growth, or if two or more gold hairs have appeared within it, the individual is defiled and the priest must pronounce him so.¹²¹ **But if there is no change—i.e., the *netek* has not spread and no naturally colored or gold hair appeared in it—then, regardless of whether the appearance of the *netek* is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin,**

33 the person must shave himself in the vicinity of the *netek*, but he must not shave the *netek* or two rows of hairs surrounding and adjacent to the *netek*, in order to enable the priest to easily determine if it has spread when he next examines it. The priest must then quarantine the person with the *netek* again for seven days.

The seventh day of the first quarantine week also counts as the first day of the second quarantine week.¹²²

34 The priest must examine the *netek* on the seventh (i.e., 13th) day. If the *netek* has spread,¹²³ or if gold hair has appeared within it,¹²⁴ the individual is defiled and the priest must pronounce him so. **If there is again no change—i.e., the *netek* did not spread on the skin and no gold hair appeared on it—then, regardless of whether its appearance is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin, the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement, and the individual must immerse himself and his garments in a *mikveh* and undergo the rest of the purification process that will be described later,¹²⁵ and then he will become rid of this defilement in fact.** No third quarantine period is needed.

35 But if the *netek* spreads on the skin after he has been declared rid of this defilement, 36 the priest must examine him, and if the *netek* has indeed spread on the skin, the priest need not search for a gold hair, for he is defiled on account of the *netek* having spread.

Similarly, if two gold hairs appear on the skin after he has been declared rid of this defilement, this suffices to defile him.¹²⁶

37 But if the appearance—i.e., color—of the *netek* has remained the same, or if black hair or hair of any color other than gold has grown in it, the *netek* has healed. He is therefore not defiled, and the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement.

Suspicion of Tzara'at due to a Lack of Pigmentation

38 If a man or woman has spots on the skin of their flesh that are similar to those

119. 14:1-32. 120. Rashi here and on v. 35. 121. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:2. 122. *Ibid.*, 9:9. 123. Rashi on v. 35. 124. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:2, 9:9. 125. 14:1-32. 126. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:2.

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40 וגבר ארי יתר שער רישה קריח הוא דכי הוא: 41 ואם מקבל אפודי יתר שער רישה גליש הוא דכי הוא: 42 וארי יהי בקרחתה או בגלושתה מכתש חור סמוק סגירות סגיא היא בקרחתה או בגלושתה: 43 ויחזי יתה כהנא והא עמיק מכתשא חורא סמקא בקרחתה או בגלושתה כמחזי סגירות משך בסרא: 44 גבר סגיר הוא מסאב הוא סאבא וסאבא כהנא ברישה מכתשה: 45 וסגירא די בה מכתשא לבושהי יהון מבזעין ורישה יהי פריע ועל שפם כאבלא יתעטף ולא תסתאבון ולא תסתאבון יקרי: 46 כל יומי די מכתשא בה יהי מסאב מסאב הוא בלחודהי יתב מקרא למשריתא מותבה:

◆ ששי (שלישי במחזורין) 40 ואיש כי ימרט ראשו קרח הוא טהור הוא: 41 ואם מפאת פניו ימרט ראשו גבה הוא טהור הוא: 42 וכי יהיה בקרחת או בגבחת נגע לבן אדמדם צרעת פרחת הוא בקרחתו או בגבחתו: 43 וראה אתו הכהן והנה שאת הנגע לבנה אדמדם בקרחתו או בגבחתו במראה צרעת עור בשר: 44 איש צרוע הוא טמא הוא טמא וטמאנו הכהן בראשו נגעו: 45 והצרוע אשר בו הנגע בגדיו יהיו פרמים וראשו יהיה פרוע ועל שפם יעטה וטמא | טמא יקרא: 46 כל ימי אשר הנגע בו וטמא טמא הוא בדר יושב מחוץ למחנה מושבו: ס

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שאין מטמאין בארבע מראות — שאת ותולדתה, בהרת ותולדתה: 44 בראשו נגעו. אין לי אלא נתקין, מניין לרבות שאר המנגעים? תלמוד לומר: "טמא וטמאנו", לרבות את כלן, על כלן הוא אומר: "בגדיו יהיו פרמים" וגו': 45 פרמים. קרועים: פרוע. מגדל שער: ועל שפם יעטה. כאבל: שפם. שער השפתיים, גרינו"ן בלעזי: וטמא טמא יקרא. משמיע שהוא טמא ויפרשו ממנו: 46 בדר יושב. שלא יהיו שאר טמאים יושבים עמו, ואמרו רבותינו¹²⁸: מה נשתנה משאר טמאים לישב בדר? הואיל והוא הבדיל בלשון הרע בין איש לאשתו ובין איש לרעהו, אף הוא יבדל: מחוץ למחנה. חוץ לשלש מחנות:

40 קרח הוא טהור הוא. טהור מטמאת נתקין, שאין נדון בסימני ראש וזקן, שהם מקום שער, אלא בסימני נגעי עור בשר — בשער לבן, מחזה, ופשיון: 41 ואם מפאת פניו. משפוע קדקד כלפי פניו קרוי "גבחת", ואף הצדעין שמכאן ומכאן בכלל, ומשפוע קדקד כלפי אחוריו קרוי "קרחת". 42 נגע לבן אדמדם. פתור. מניין שאר המראות? תלמוד לומר: "נגע". 43 במראה צרעת עור בשר. במראה הצרעת האמור בפרשת עור בשר¹²⁹: "אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו", ומה אמור בז' שטמא בארבע מראות, ונדון בשני שבועות. ולא במראה צרעת האמור בשחין ומקדה, שהוא נדון בשבוע אחד, ולא במראה נתקין של מקום שער,

16. פסוק ב. 17. שפם. 18. ערכין טז, ב.

46 He will remain defiled as long as the lesion remains upon him. Since he is defiled on account of *tzara'at*, he must, unlike a person defiled in any other way, dwell isolated from other people, including other defiled persons.¹²⁸ His dwelling must be outside the camp: when we will later be organized into three concentric camps,¹²⁹ he must dwell outside all three. This is a just, corrective reciprocal punishment for his having caused a rift between married couples or friends through gossip or slander.

128. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, p. 74, note 49. 129. Numbers 1:51-2:34; see also Deuteronomy 12:5-18.

Unnatural Baldness

- ◆ **Sixth Reading (Third when combined) 40** If a man loses all the hair on the back of his head (see Figure 5), he is unnaturally bald. Therefore, if a lesion develops on this area of his head, he cannot become defiled by it according to the diagnostic rules governing normally hairy parts of the head; such a lesion is rather diagnosed according to the rules governing lesions on the rest of the body, which were given previously.¹²⁷

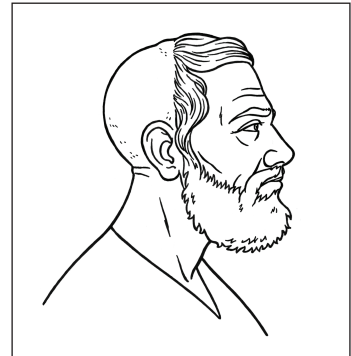


Figure 5. Back Baldness

41 Similarly, if he loses the hair on the side of his head toward his face, including the temples on each side of the head (see Figure 6), he is unnaturally bald at the front. Therefore, if a lesion develops on this area of his head, he cannot become defiled by it according to the diagnostic rules governing normally hairy parts of the head; again, such a lesion is rather diagnosed according to the rules governing lesions on the rest of the body, which were given previously.

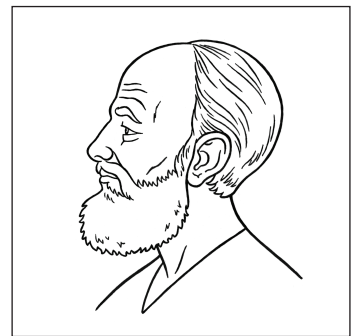


Figure 6. Front Baldness

42 Thus, if a lesion that is either uniformly white or white with red streaks develops on the back or front bald area of such a person's head, it is a likely case of *tzara'at* erupting on his back or front bald area.

43 The priest must therefore examine it. If there is indeed a lesion on his back or front bald area, and this lesion is either wool-white or another of the four shades of white, and its whiteness is either uniformly white or white with red streaks, like the appearance of *tzara'at* on the skin of the flesh, the lesion must be subjected to the diagnostic process described previously for a body-lesion.

44 If the lesion satisfies any of the diagnostic criteria, then he is a man afflicted with *tzara'at*; he is defiled. The priest must therefore pronounce him defiled on account of his lesion on his head.

Behavior Required of a Person Afflicted with Tzara'at

45 As to what must be done with a person afflicted with any type of *tzara'at*, i.e., a person on whom there is a lesion that has been diagnosed as *tzara'at*: his garments must be torn, the hair on his head must be allowed to overgrow; he must cover his face with a garment down to his mustache (or, if a woman, simply down to the upper lip) and call out loud, "Defiled! Defiled!" so people will know to stay away from him.

127. Above, vv. 1-17. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 92-100.

ONKELOS

47 ולבושא ארי יהי בה מכתש סגיר ובלבוש עמר או בלבוש כתר: 48 או בשתיא או בערבא לכתנא ולעמרא או במשכא או בכל עבדת משר: 49 ויהי מכתשא ירק או סמוק בלבושא או במשכא או בשתיא או בערבא או בכל מן דמשך מכתש סגירותא הוא ויתחזי לכתנא: 50 ויתחזי כהנא ית מכתשא ויסגר ית מכתשא שבועא יומין: 51 ויתחזי ית מכתשא ביוםא שביעאה ארי אוסף מכתשא בלבושא או בשתיא או בערבא או במשכא לכל די יתעבד משכא לעבדתא סגירותא מחסרא מכתשא מסאב הוא: 52 ויזקד ית לבושא או ית שתיא או ית ערבא בעמרא או בכתנא או ית כל מן דמשך די יהי בה מכתשא ארי סגירותא מחסרא היא בנורא תתוקד: 53 ואם יתחזי כהנא והא לא אוסף מכתשא בלבושא או בשתיא או בערבא או בכל מן דמשך: 54 ויפקד כהנא ויתחזי ית די בה מכתשא ויסגרנה שבועא יומין תנינות: 55 ויתחזי כהנא בתר דתחזי ית מכתשא והא לא שגא מכתשא מן פד הנה ומכתשא לא אוסף מסאב הוא בנורא תוקדנה תברא היא בשחיקותה או בחדותה:

47 והבגד כִּי־יְהִיָּהּ בּוֹ נִגַּע צִרְעַת בְּבֶגֶד צֶמֶר או בְּבֶגֶד פִּשְׁתִּים: 48 או בִּשְׂתִי או בְּעֶרֶב לִפְשֵׁתִים וְלַצֶּמֶר או בְּעוֹר או בְּכָל־מְלֹאכֶת עוֹר: 49 וְהָיָה הַנֶּגַע יִרְקַק | או אֲדָמָדִם בְּבֶגֶד או בְּעוֹר או־בִּשְׂתִי או־בְּעֶרֶב או בְּכָל־פְּלִיעוֹר נִגַּע צִרְעַת הוּא וְהִרְאָה אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן: 50 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע וְהִסְגִּיר אֶת־הַנֶּגַע שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: 51 וְרָאָה אֶת־הַנֶּגַע בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי כִּי־פָשָׁה הַנֶּגַע בְּבֶגֶד או־בִּשְׂתִי או־בְּעֶרֶב או בְּעוֹר לְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה הָעוֹר לְמַלְאכָה צִרְעַת מִמָּאֶרֶת הַנֶּגַע טָמֵא הוּא: 52 וְשָׂרָף אֶת־הַבֶּגֶד או אֶת־הַשְּׂתִי | או אֶת־הָעֶרֶב בַּצֶּמֶר או בִּפְשֵׁתִים או אֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הָעוֹר אֲשֶׁר־יְהִיָּהּ בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע כִּי צִרְעַת מִמָּאֶרֶת הוּא בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרָף: 53 וְאִם יִרְאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה לֹא־פָשָׁה הַנֶּגַע בְּבֶגֶד או בִּשְׂתִי או בְּעֶרֶב או בְּכָל־פְּלִיעוֹר: 54 וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וּכְבָּסוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע וְהִסְגִּירוּ שִׁבְעַת־יָמִים שְׁנִית:

◆ שביעי* (רביעי במחובדין) 55 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אַחֲרָי | הַכֶּבֶס אֶת־הַנֶּגַע וְהִנֵּה לֹא־הָפָךְ הַנֶּגַע אֶת־עֵינוֹ וְהַנֶּגַע לֹא־פָשָׁה טָמֵא הוּא בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרָפֵנוּ פָּתַתָּה הוּא בְּקִרְחָתוֹ או בְּגִבְחָתוֹ:

RASHI

אשר בו הנגע. יכול מקום הנגע בלבד? תלמוד לומר: "את אשר בו הנגע". יכול כל הבגד כלו טעון כבוס? תלמוד לומר: "הנגע". הא כיצד? יכבס מן הבגד עמו: 55 אחרי הכבס. לשון העשות: לא הפך הנגע את עינו. לא הכהה ממראיתו: והנגע לא פשה. שמענו, שאם לא הפך ולא פשה — טמא, ואין צריך לומר לא הפך ופשה. הפך ולא פשה, אינו יודע מה יעשה לו? תלמוד לומר: "והסגיר את הנגע", מכל מקום. דברי רבי יהודה. וחקמים אומרים וכו', כדאיאתא בתורת כהנים, ורמזיה כן לישב המקרא על אפניו: פחתת הוא. לשון גמא, כמו: "באחת הפחתים", כלומר שפלה היא, נגע שמראיו שוקעין: בקרחתו

48 לפשתיים ולצמר. של פשתיים או של צמר: או בעור. זה עור שלא נעשה בו מלאכה: או בכל מלאכת עור. זה עור שנעשה בו מלאכה: 49 ירקק. ירק שבירקין: אדמדם. אדם שבאדמים: 51 צרעת ממארת. לשון "סלון ממאיר"¹⁹, פוינינוט בלעז²⁰. ומדרשו²¹: תן בו מארה, שלא תהנה הימנו: 52 בצמר או בפשתיים. של צמר או של פשתיים, זהו פשוטו. ומדרשו²²: יכול לביא גזי צמר ואניצי פשתן וישרפם עמו, תלמוד לומר: "הוא באש תשרף", אינה צריכה דבר אחר עמו. אם כן, מה תלמוד לומר: "בצמר או בפשתיים"? להוציא את האמירות שבו, שהן ממין אחר. "אמירות", לשון שפה, כמו "אמרא": 54 את

19. יחזקאל כח, כד. 20. דוקר. 21. תורת כהנים. 22. שם. 23. שמואלב יז, ט.

*If the Sabbath of *parashat Tazria* occurs on the 1st of Nisan, the sixth reading continues until the end of the *parashah*, the *Maftir*-reading for *Rosh Chodesh* (p. 266) is the seventh reading, and the *Maftir* for *Shabbat HaChodesh* (p. 281) is read as the *Maftir*.

Tzara'at on Garments

47 As for the laws regarding a garment that has the lesion of *tzara'at* upon it, these laws apply only to lesions (a) on woolen garments, (b) on linen garments, 48 (c) on threads prepared to be used as the warp or the woof of linen or wool garments,¹³⁰ (d) on unworked leather, or (e) on anything made from leather (see Figure 7, page 98).

49 If the lesion on the garment, on the warp- or woof-threads, on the leather garment, or on any leather article, covers at least an area equivalent to a square each of whose sides are equal to the diameter of a Cicilian bean¹³¹ [i.e., 154 mm² or 0.24 in²] and is pure green or pure red, it is a lesion of *tzara'at*, and it must therefore be shown to the priest.

50 The priest must examine the lesion, confirm that it is the required color and size, and quarantine the article with the lesion for seven days.

51 He must examine the lesion on the seventh day. If the lesion has spread on the garment, the warp- or woof-threads, the leather garment, or any article made from leather, the lesion is an onerous *tzara'at*-lesion—in that the article's owner will suffer inconvenience and monetary loss on its account—since it is ritually defiled and may no longer be used.

52 Rather, he must burn the garment, the warp- or woof-threads of wool or linen, or whatever leather article that has the lesion upon it, since the lesion is an onerous *tzara'at*-lesion. Nonetheless, only the wool, linen, or leather must be burned and destroyed in fire; if the hems of the garment are made out of a different material, they need not be destroyed.

Before it is burned, the afflicted article is ritually defiled to the same degree as a man who has suffered two or more discrete non-seminal discharges,¹³² which will be discussed in detail later.¹³³

53 But if the priest examines the lesion and the lesion has not spread on the garment, the warp- or woof-threads, or whatever leather article it is on,

54 the priest must order that the part of the article on which the lesion is located be washed, and he must quarantine it again for seven days. The entire article need not be washed; only the area containing the lesion and the adjacent part.

- ◆ *Seventh Reading* (Fourth when combined)* 55 Then the priest must examine the article after the lesion has been washed and quarantined for a second week. If the lesion has not changed its color by turning a lighter or darker shade of red or green, and the lesion has either not spread at all or has spread but not covered the entire article, it is defiled. You must burn it in fire, for it is now clear that the lesion is a deep-looking lesion on the worn or new article. If, however, the discolored lesion spreads over the entire article, it thereby becomes rid of this defilement.

If the lesion does not spread but changes in color from pure red to pure green (or vice versa), it must either be treated as a new lesion and quarantined or be pronounced defiled.¹³⁴

130. *Negaim* 11:8; *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 13:8. 131. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 12:1. 132. *Ibid.*, 13:13. 133. Below, 15:4-12. 134. *Sifra*, chapter 15:7.

— ONKELOS —

56 ואם חזא כהנא וזא עמא
מכתשא בתר דחורו יתה ויבזע
יתה מן לבושא או מן משכא או
מן שתיא או מן ערבא: 57 ואם
תתחוי עוד בלבושא או בשתיא
או בערבא או בכל מן דמשך סגיא
היא בנורא תוקדנה ית די בה
מכתשא: 58 ולבושא או שתיא או
ערבא או כל מן דמשך די יתחור
ויעדי מנהון מכתשא ויצטבע
תנינות וידבי: 59 דא אורייתא
דמכתש סגירי בלבוש עמר או
כתנא או שתיא או ערבא או כל
מן דמשך לדכיותה או לסאבותה:

56 ואם ראה הכהן והנה פה הנגע אחרי הפס אתו
וקרע אתו מן הבגד או מן העור או מן השתי או מן
הערב:

◆ מפטיר 57 ואם תראה עוד בגד או בשתי או בערב
או בכל כלי עור פרחת הוא באש תשרפנו את אשר
בו הנגע: 58 והבגד או השתי או הערב או כל כלי
העור אשר תכבס וסר מהם הנגע וכבס שנית וטהר:
59 זאת תורת נגע צרעת בגד הצמר או הפשתים או
השתי או הערב או כלי עור לטהרו או לטמאו:

ס"ז פסוקים. בנ"ה סימן.

— RASHI —

הקדקד ולא חריו. כף מפרש בתורת כהנים: 56 וקרע
אתו. יקרע מקום הנגע מן הבגד וישרפנו: 57 פרחת
הוא. דבר החורר וצומח: באש תשרפנו. את כל
הבגד: 58 וסר מהם הנגע. אם כשכבסוהו בתחלה
על פי כהן, סר ממנו הנגע לגמרי: וכבס שנית. לשון
טבילה. תרגום של "כבוסין" שבפרשה זו לשון לבון
— "ויתחור", חוץ מזה, שאינו ללבון אלא לטבל,
לכף תרגמו: "ויצטבע". וכן כל כבוס בגדים שהן
לטיבילה, מתרגמין: "ויצטבע":

חסלת פרשת תזריע

או בגבחתו. כתרגומו: "בשחיקותה או בחתותה":
קרחתו. שחקים ישנים. ומפני המדרש שהצרך
לגזרה שוה: מנין לפריחה בבגדים שהיא טהורה?
נאמרה "קרחת וגבחת" באדם, ונאמרה "קרחת
וגבחת" בבגדים. מה להלן פרח בכלו — טהור, אף
כאן פרח בכלו — טהור, לכך אצו הכתוב לשון
"קרחת וגבחת". ולענין פרושו ותרגומו זהו משמעו:
"קרחת" — לשון ישנים, "וגבחת" — לשון חדשים,
כאלו נכתב: באחריתו או בקדמותו, שהקרחת לשון
אחרים, והגבחת לשון פנים, כמו שכתוב: "ואם
מפאת פניו וגו', והקרחת כל ששופע ויורד מן

24. פסוק מא.

56 But if the priest examines the article after it has been washed and quarantined for a second week, and the lesion has turned a lighter or darker shade of red or green, he must rip it out of the garment, the leather, or the warp- or woof-threads, and burn the part of the article that was ripped out.

- ◆ ***Maftir* 57 If the lesion reappears on the garment, the warp- or woof-threads, or any leather article, it is a recurrent growth. You must burn in fire the entire article upon which the lesion is found.**

58 Regarding any garment, warp- or woof-threads, or leather article that you wash by order of the priest, quarantine for a second week, and from which the lesion then disappears entirely, it must be immersed a second time—this time not to be washed, but to be purified¹³⁵ in a *mikveh*—and then it will be rid of this defilement.

59 This is the law governing the diagnosis of a lesion of *tzara'at* on a woolen or linen garment, warp- or woof-threads, or any leather article, according to which it becomes rid of defilement or defiled."

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Tazria* is on p. 243.

If it is *Shabbat HaChodesh* (and it is not also the 1st of Nisan), the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *Shabbat HaChodesh* (p. 281) are read instead of the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *parashat Tazria*.

If it is the 1st of Nisan, the seventh reading is the reading for *Rosh Chodesh* (p. 266) and the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *Shabbat HaChodesh* (p. 281) are read instead of the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *parashat Tazria*.



135. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 92-99.

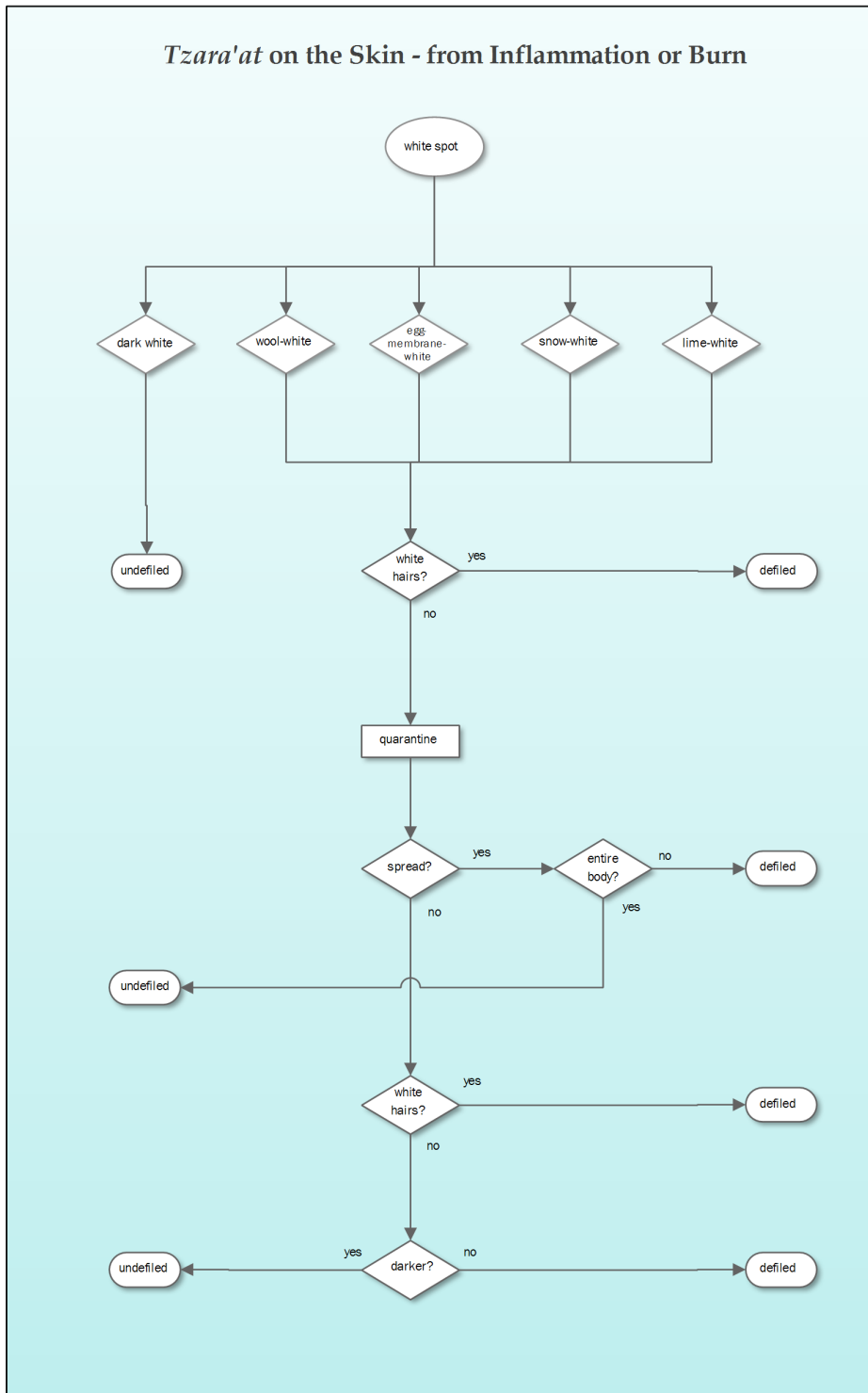


Figure 3. Tzara'at on the Skin— from an Inflammation or Burn

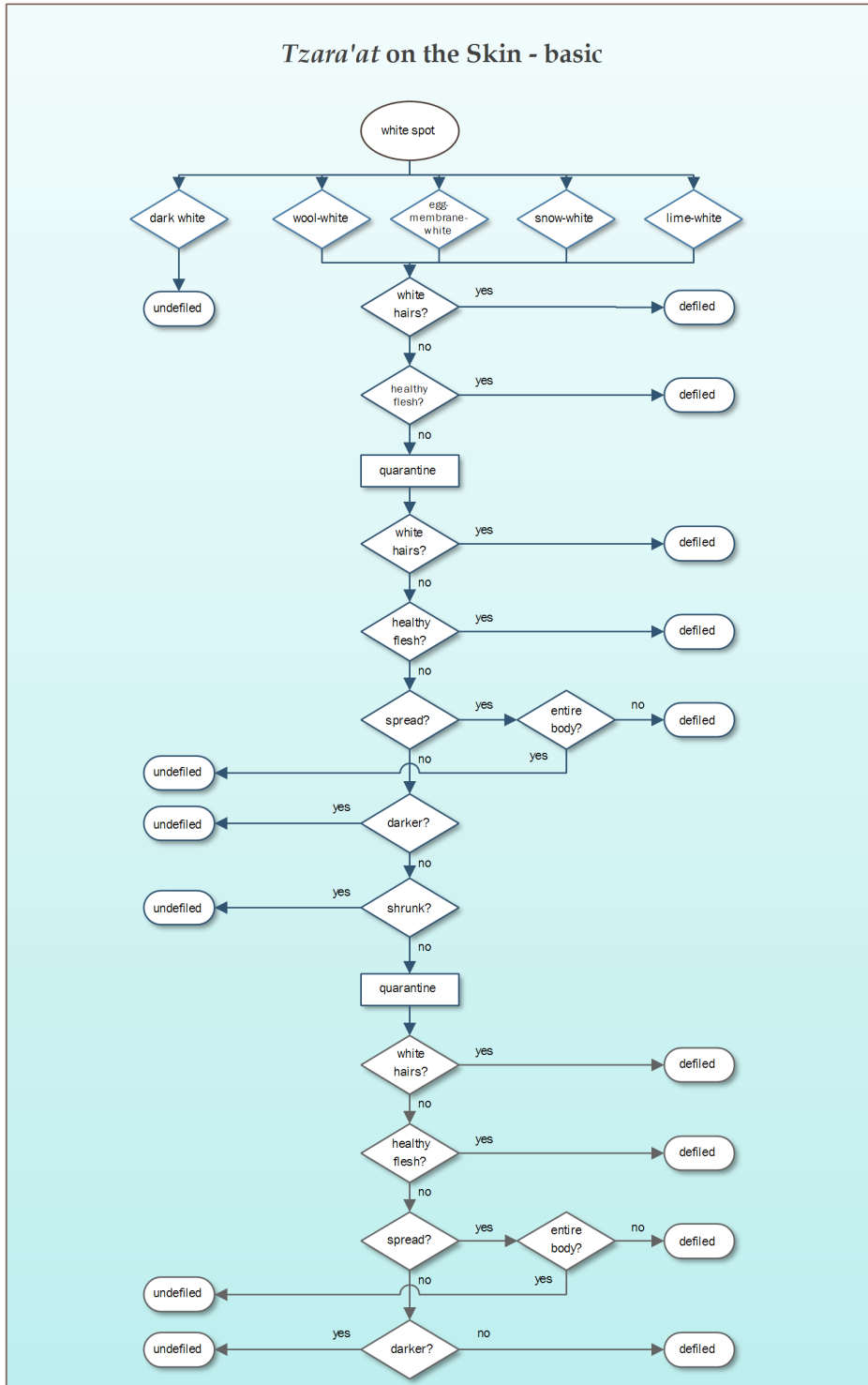


Figure 2. Tzara'at on the Skin — Basic

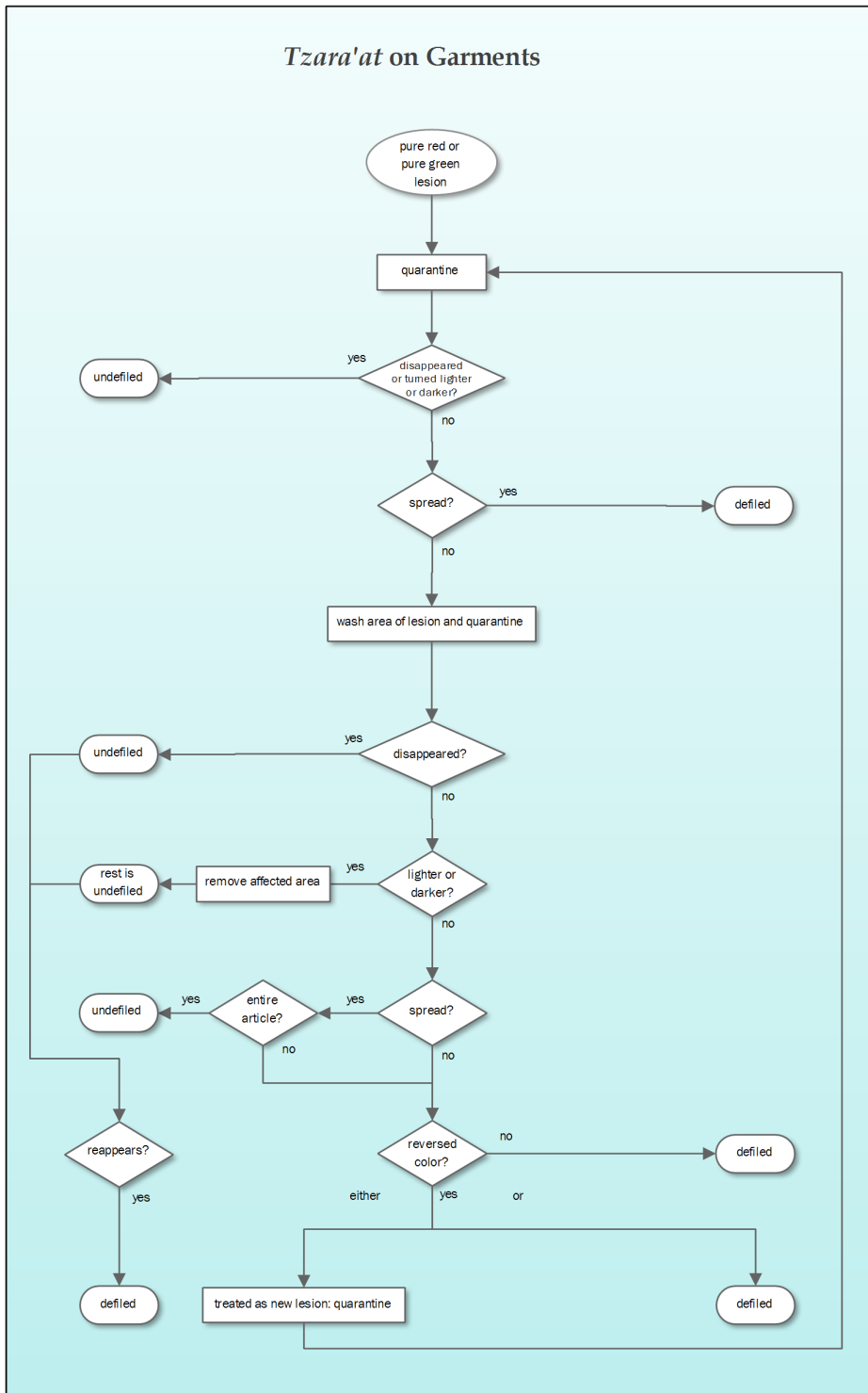


Figure 7. Tzara'at on Garments

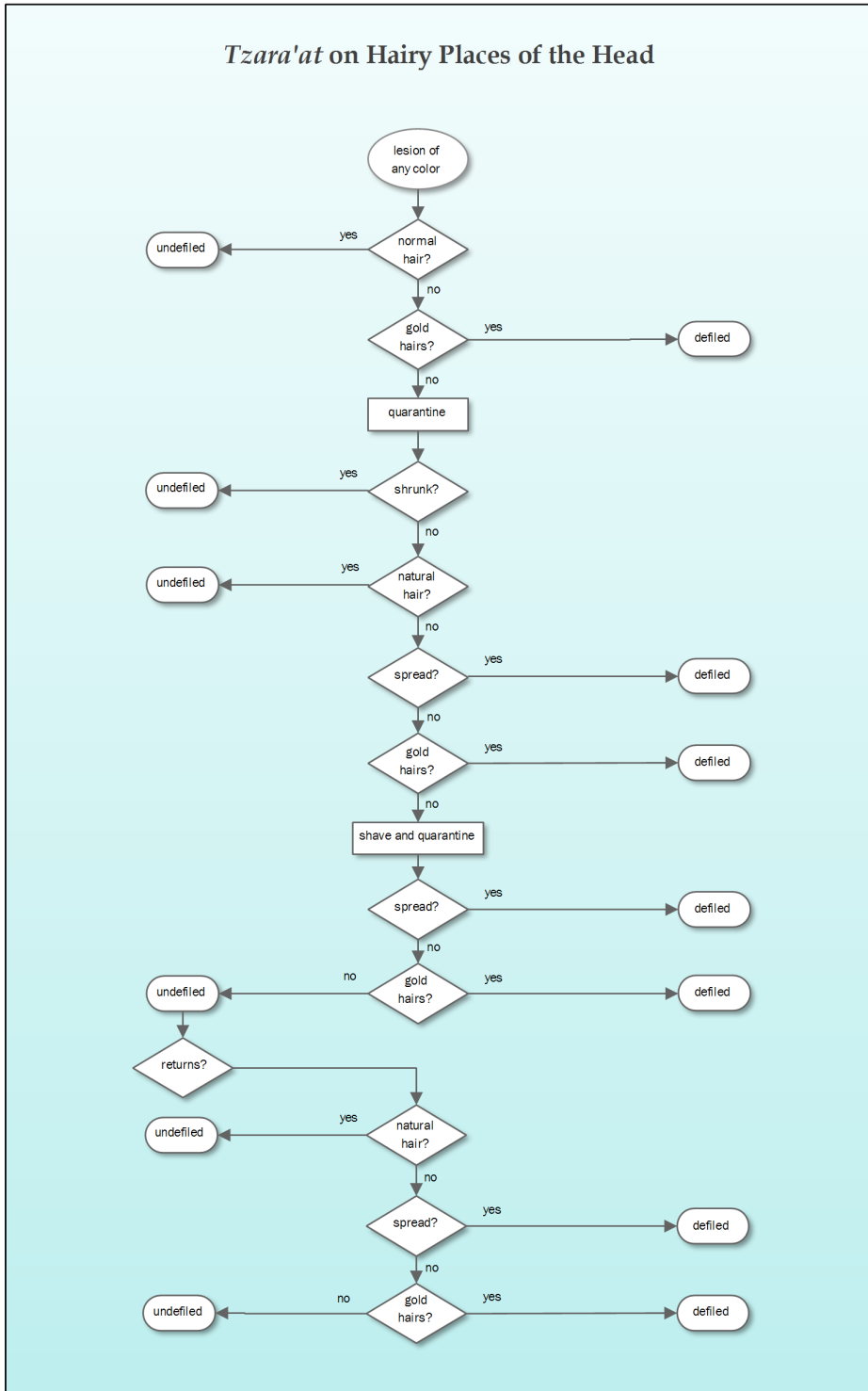


Figure 4. Tzara'at on the Hairy Places of the Head



GENESIS

Bereishit
Noach
Lech Lecha
Vayeira
Chayei Sarah
Toldot
Vayeitzei
Vayishlach
Vayeishev
Mikeitz
Vayigash
Vayechi

EXODUS

Shemot
Va'eira
Bo
Beshalach
Yitro
Mishpatim
Terumah
Tetzaveh
Tisa
Vayakheil
Pekudei

LEVITICUS

Vayikra
Tzav
Shemini
Tazria

Metzora

28

מצרע


Acharei Mot
Kedoshim
Emor
Behar
Bechukotai

NUMBERS

Bemidbar
Naso
Beha'alotecha
Shelach
Korach
Chukat
Balak
Pinchas
Matot
Masei

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim
Va'etchanan
Eikev
Re'eh
Shoftim
Teitzei
Tavo
Nitzavim
Vayeilech
Ha'azinu
Vezot Habrachah



מצרע Metzora

Overview

The name of this *parashah*, *Metzora*, means “a person afflicted with *tzara’at*.” *Tzara’at*, as we saw in the previous *parashah*, *Tazria*, is a condition that imparts ritual impurity, thereby denying the afflicted person entrance to the Temple and involvement in any of its rituals, and even in the social life of the community. Thus separated from the Temple—the locus of life and Godliness (which is the source of life)—and the life of the community, the *metzora* is, in the sages’ words, a walking metaphor for death.

Although the word *metzora* is indeed one of the first words in the *parashah*, the actual subject of the first third of the *parashah* is the process by which the *metzora* becomes *cured* of *tzara’at*, i.e., the negation of the condition of being a *metzora*. The subject of the next third of the *parashah* is *tzara’at* that afflicts a house and how an afflicted house is purified of this defilement. The subject of the final third of the *parashah* is two additional but unrelated forms of defilement and the process of purification from them.

Given the debilitating nature of *tzara’at*, it seems odd indeed that a *parashah* devoted to curing an individual of this condition should be named after the one afflicted by it. But the explanation we gave of the name of the previous *parashah*, *Tazria*, can serve to explain the choice of the name of this *parashah*, as well. *Parashat Tazria* is named after the act of “sowing”—the act of optimistically embarking on a process leading to new life and new growth—even though the bulk of the *parashah* is focused on the particulars of the life-negating disease of *tzara’at*, because *tzara’at* is not intended as a punishment but as a new beginning, an impetus to reaffirm life. As such, it can and should indeed be seen as “sowing” the seeds of a new, higher level of living.

Similarly, *parashat Metzora* is named after the person afflicted with this malady—despite the fact that the bulk of the *parashah* is focused on how to extricate the sufferer from it—because the purification process is nothing more than a continuation of the condition itself, that is, the next step in the rehabilitative process that began with the original contraction of the condition.



One of the idioms the prophets use to describe the redemptive process—and even the Messiah himself—is that of “sprouting”:

- “For as the earth sends forth its growth, and as a garden sprouts its seedlings, so will God cause righteousness and praise to sprout in the presence of all the nations.”¹
- “Behold, the days are coming, says God, when I will raise up a righteous sprout from David; a king will reign and prosper, and he will administer justice and righteousness in the land.”²

In addition, the sages of the Talmud say that the Messiah’s epithet is “the *Metzora* of the House of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince,” citing the verse,³ “In truth, it was our illnesses that he bore and our pains that he carried, but we regarded him as a *metzora*, smitten by God and afflicted.”⁴

The Talmud even records an episode in which the Messiah was seen in the guise of a *metzora*:

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi met Elijah the prophet standing at the entrance to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai’s cave. He asked Elijah, “When will the Messiah come?”

He replied, “Go and ask him himself.”

“Where is he sitting?”

“At the entrance to the city.”

“And by what sign will I be able recognize him?”

“He is sitting among the destitute people afflicted with *tzara’at*. But whereas the others first loosen all their bandages and then [after treating all their sores] retie them all, he unties and reties his [bandages] one at a time, thinking, ‘Perhaps I will be summoned [at any moment to reveal myself as the Messiah, and if so,] I must not be delayed [by having to re-bandage many sores].’”⁵

We have seen⁶ why the Messiah, of all possible manifestations, assumes the garb of a *metzora*. But in this context, it is possible to interpret the names of the two *parashiot* that discuss *tzara’at* as referring to the process of redemption: *Tazria*, meaning “sow,” refers to the work we do to cause redemption to “sprout”; *Metzora* refers to the Messiah himself. Thus, the phrase *Tazria-Metzora* allegorically means “Sow the seeds of the messianic redemption.”

In most years, the two *parashiot* of *Tazria* and *Metzora* are combined in the public reading of the Torah in the synagogue. In the allegorical context just mentioned, this teaches us that we must view our efforts to refine the world through studying the Torah and fulfilling its commandments not only as ends unto themselves—which they most certainly are, inasmuch as we are instructed to fulfill God’s commandments out of devoted obedience—but also as the means by which we hasten the advent of the Messiah. We must not dissociate our *Tazria*—our sowing—from *Metzora*—its messianic goal.

Moreover, we should ideally envision our efforts and their goal—living our lives according to the Torah’s dictates and the messianic Redemption—not as two separate entities, but as one continuum. Living the Torah life leads organically into the Redemption, and the Re-

1. Isaiah 61:11.

2. Jeremiah 23:5; see also *ibid*, 33:15.

3. Isaiah 53:4.

4. *Sanhedrin* 98b; Rashi *ad loc*.

5. *Sanhedrin* 98a; Rashi *ad loc*. See discussion and sources cited in *Kol Yisrael*, pp. 449-455.

6. On 13:2, above.

demption is simply the fullest flowering of the Torah and its commandments that we knew during our exile. The Torah of the messianic future will be the same Torah we now possess, the only difference being that its innermost dimensions will finally be fully revealed to us. Similarly, in the messianic future we will continue to observe the Torah's commandments, only in their fullest scope—both quantitatively, as those commandments that can be performed only when the Temple stands and only when the entire Jewish people are settled in their homeland become once again practicable; and qualitatively, as reality sheds the gross materialism that presently conceals most of the Divine revelations that result from observing God's commandments—including the innate materialistic orientation of our own consciousness, which will be replaced by heightened Divine consciousness.

In reading about the odyssey of the *metzora* and the process of his or her redemption from social ostracism—"exiled" from society—we are at the same time reading about both our own personal odysseys of spiritual crisis and redemption as well as our collective, national odyssey through our exile, as we work toward our final Redemption.⁷

7. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 70-80.

— ONKELOS —

14:1 ומליל יי עם משה למימר:
2 דא תהי אורייתא דסגירא ביומא
דיכנותא ויתמי לות כהנא: 3 ויפוק
כהנא למבא למשריתא ויחזי
כהנא והא אתסי מכתש סגירותא
מן סגירא: 4 ויפקד כהנא ויסב
לדמדכי תרתין צפרין חזן דכין
ואעא דארזא וצבע ודורי ואזובא:
5 ויפקד כהנא ויבוס ית צפרא
חדא למן דחסף על מי מבוע:

14:1 וידבר יהוה אל־משה לאמר: 2 זאת תהיה תורת
המצרע ביום טהרתו והובא אל־הכהן: 3 ויצא הכהן
אל־מחויז למחנה וראה הכהן והנה נרפא נגע־הצרעת
מן־הצרע: 4 וצוה הכהן ולקח למטהר שתי־צפרים
חיות טהרות ועץ ארו ושני תולעת ואזוב: 5 וצוה הכהן
ושחט את־הצפור האחת אל־בלי־חרש על־מים חיים:

— RASHI —

קול: ועץ ארו. לפי שהנגעים באין על גסות הרוח:
ושני תולעת ואזוב. מה תקנתו ויתרפא, ישפיל עצמו
מגאותו, בתולעת וכאזוב: עץ ארו. מקל של ארו:
ושני תולעת. לשון של צמר צבוע ודורית: 5 על מים
חיים. נותן אותם תחלה בכלי, כדי שיהא דם צפור
נכר בהם, וכמה הן? רביעית:

2 זאת תהיה תורת המצרע וגו'. מלמד שאין מטהרין
אותו בלילה: 3 אל מחויז למחנה. חוץ לשלש מחנות
שנשתלח שם בימי חלוטו: 4 חיות. פרט לטרפות:
טהרות. פרט לעוף טמא. לפי שהנגעים באין על
לשון הרע, שהוא מעשה פטפטי דברים, לפיכך
הזקקו לטהרתו צפרים שמפטפטין תמיד בצפצוף

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[continued...] in which *chesed* is situated on the right axis and *gevurah* on the left axis. Thus, favoring one propensity over the other—rapture over devotion or vice versa—upsets the balance between these axes of the soul.

The “cure” for *tzara’at*, then, is the harmonization of these two opposing drives. In order to harmonize opposing forces, a third force, which transcends them both, must be invoked. The harmonizing force between *chesed* and *gevurah* is always *tiferet*, which, due to its direct root in *keter*, is able to transcend and include both. This, in fact, is the meaning of the word *tiferet* (“beauty”), the harmonious combination of different colors into a pleasing picture or design.

The sages teach us that the world metaphorically stands on three pillars: the study of the Torah, the sacrifices (for which prayer substitutes nowadays), and acts of loving-kindness.⁸ These three pillars correspond to the three *sefirot* of *tiferet*, *gevurah*, and *chesed*, respectively. It follows that the harmonization of rapture and devotion (*ratzo* and *shov*) is effected by the study of the Torah. This is because true study of the Torah must be undertaken out of a sense of self-nullification to God, and by nullifying ourselves to God, we can, like Him, harmonize opposites.

The Torah therefore states, “The following is the

law [literally, ‘the Torah’] regarding the person afflicted with *tzara’at*,” intimating that the cure for *tzara’at*, the harmonization of *ratzo* and *shov*, is the selfless study of the Torah.⁹

The following is the law: As has been explained, a person becomes afflicted with *tzara’at* on account of having drawn evil energy into the world through the specific misdeeds that cause this condition. Each variety of evil energy is expressed through its own “name,” or combination of energy channels (“letters”). This is alluded to in the Hebrew word for a sufferer of *tzara’at* (*מצורע*), which can be read as “one who elicits evil name[s]” (*מוציא שם רע*).

The rectification of this multiplication of evil in the world is accomplished through its inverse: drawing positive, holy energy into the world by studying the Torah profusely. Inasmuch as the Torah’s letters are all “names” of God¹⁰—i.e., configurations of holy letters, these being channels of holy energy—the influx of holiness into the world effected through the study of the Torah counteracts the influx of evil that produces *tzara’at*, replacing the destructive, evil “names” with constructive, Divine “names.”

This reality is alluded to in the opening phrase of this *parashah*, “The following is the law (literally, ‘the Torah’) [to cure] the person afflicted

8. Avot 1:2. 9. *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 2, pp. 493–494. 10. Nachmanides, Introduction to Commentary on the Torah, quoting Zohar 2:27a.

Purification from Tzara'at

14:1 God spoke to Moses, saying,

2 **"The following is the law regarding** the procedure that must be followed¹ in order to rid **the person afflicted with tzara'at** of his defilement. The process of **his purification** must take place **during the day**.

Once the symptoms of *tzara'at* have disappeared, **he must be brought to the priest** who is designated to examine him, but only after

3 **the priest has gone outside the camp**, since the afflicted person had been banished from the camp² and may not reenter it until he is pronounced rid of this defilement. **The priest must examine him, and if the lesion of tzara'at has healed in the afflicted person,**

4 **the priest must order someone to take for the person who is to be purified two fowl** that are (a) **alive** and not suffering from a fatal disease and (b) of a species that does **not** render one spiritually **defiled**, plus **an unpeeled cedar stick** at least a cubit [48 cm or 19 inches] long,³ **a strip of scarlet wool, and some hyssop**. The fowl allude to the fact that *tzara'at* is a corrective punishment for gossip or slander, which are usually said in the course of the idle chatter that is reminiscent of how fowl chirp. The stick of a tall cedar tree alludes to haughtiness, which is also punishable by *tzara'at*. The strip of wool dyed with the scarlet blood of a lowly worm and the lowly hyssop allude to the humility the sufferer must learn in order to repent of these sins. The cedar stick and the hyssop must be bound together using the excess length⁴ of the strip of scarlet wool.

5 **The priest must order someone to slaughter one fowl** such that its blood drip **into an earthenware vessel and onto spring water** that has been placed in that vessel. The amount of water that must be placed in the vessel is one quarter of a *log* [86 ml or 2.91 oz]; any more than this will dilute the fowl's blood to the point that it will no longer be discernible in the water.

Even though this fowl is from a species normally permitted for consumption and it was slaughtered properly, you may not eat it.⁵ In order to prevent anyone from eating it, it is buried immediately after being slaughtered.⁶

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[2] **The following is the law:** As we have explained previously,⁷ *tzara'at* indicates the presence of an overabundance of spiritual "light," which overflows its "vessel." This imbalance is manifest experientially as a rapturous desire to experience Divinity (*ratzo*) unmitigated by a concomitant humble devotion to accomplishing God's will (*shov*).

Divine rapture is an expression of our love of God, whereas humble devotion to His will is an expression of our fear of God. Love and fear of God are in turn expressions of the soul's powers of loving-kindness (*chesed*) and restraint (*gevurah*). As we have seen, these are reflections of the supernal *sefirot* of the same names, which are organized into a structural hierarchy

1. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 12, pp. 78-81. 2. Above, 13:46. 3. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* at 11:1. 4. *Negaim* 14:1. 5. Rashi on Deuteronomy 14:12. 6. *Negaim* 14:1; *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* at 11:1. 7. On 13:2, above.

ONKELOS

6 ית צפרא חיתא יסב יתה וית
אעא דארוא וית צבע ויהוה וית
אזובא ויטבל יתהוה וית צפרא
חיתא בדמא דצפרא דנכיסא על
מי מבוע: 7 וידי על דמדכי מן
סגירותא שבע זמנן וידכנה וישלח
ית צפרא חיתא על אפי חקלא:
8 ויצבע דמדכי ית לבושוהי
ויגלח ית כל שערה ויסחי במיא
וידכי ובתר בן יעול למשריתא
ויתב מברא למשכנה שבועא יומין:
9 ויהי ביומא שביעאה יגלח ית
כל שערה ית רישה וית דקנה וית
גביני עינוהי וית כל שערה יגלח
ויצבע ית לבושוהי ויסחי ית בסרה
במיא וידכי: 10 וביומא תמינאה
יסב תרין אמרין שלמין ואמרתא
חדא בת שמה שלמתא ותלתא
עשרונין סלתא מנחתא דפילא
במשח ולגא חד דמשחא: 11 ויקים
כהנא דמדכי ית גברא דמדכי
ויתהוה קדם יי בתרע משכן זמנא:
12 ויסב כהנא ית אמרא חד ויקרב
יתה לאשמא וית לגא דמשחא
ויריס יתהוה ארמא קדם יי:

6 אֶת־הַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה יִקַּח אֹתָהּ וְאֶת־עֵץ הָאֶזְוִי וְאֶת־שְׁנֵי
הַתּוֹלְעֹת וְאֶת־הָאֵזוֹב וְטָבַל אוֹתָם וְאֶת | הַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה
בְּדָם הַצֹּפֶר הַשְּׁחֻטָּה עַל הַמַּיִם הַחַיִּים: 7 וְהִזָּה עַל
הַמִּטְהָר מִן־הַצֹּרֶעֶת שִׁבְעַ פַּעַמִּים וְטָהָר וְשָׁלַח אֶת־
הַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה: 8 וְכִבֶּם הַמִּטְהָר אֶת־בְּגָדָיו
וְגִלַּח אֶת־כָּל־שְׁעָרוֹ וְרִחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָהָר וְאַחֵר יָבֹוא אֶל־
הַמִּשְׁכָּנָה וְיֵשֵׁב מִחוּץ לְאַהֲלוֹ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: 9 וְהִיָּה בַּיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִגְלַח אֶת־כָּל־שְׁעָרוֹ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ וְאֶת־זַקְנוֹ
וְאֶת גְּבִת עֵינָיו וְאֶת־כָּל־שְׁעָרוֹ יִגְלַח וְכִבֶּם אֶת־בְּגָדָיו
וְרִחֵץ אֶת־בְּשָׁרוֹ בַּמַּיִם וְטָהָר: 10 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִקַּח
שְׁנֵי־כִבְשִׁים תְּמִימִם וְכִבְשָׁה אֶחָת בַּת־שָׁנָתָה תְּמִימָה
וְשִׁלְשָׁה עֶשְׂרִינָם סֵלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בַּשֶּׁמֶן וְלֹג אֶחָד
שֶׁמֶן: 11 וְהִעֲמִיד הַכֹּהֵן הַמִּטְהָר אֶת הָאִישׁ הַמִּטְהָר
וְאֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: 12 וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־
הַכִּבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד וְהִקְרִיב אוֹתוֹ לְאַשֶׁם וְאֶת־לֹג הַשֶּׁמֶן וְהִנִּיף
אֹתָם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

RASHI

כל מקום כנוס שער ונראה: 10 וכבשה אחת.
לחטאת: ושלשה עשרונים. לנסכי שלשה כבשים
הללו, שחטאתו ואשמו של מצרע טעוין נסכים:
ולג אחד שמן. להזות עליו שבע ולתן ממנו על תנוף
אזנו ומתן בהונות: 11 לפני ה'. בשער נקנור, ולא
בעורה עצמה, לפי שהוא מחסר כפורים: 12 והקריב
אתו לאשם. יקריבנו לתוף העזרה לשם אשם: והניף.
שחטאת טעון תנופה חי: והניף אתם. את האשם ואת
הלג:

6 את הצפר החיה יקח אתה. מלמד שאינו אוגדה
עמהם, אלא מפרישה לעצמה, אבל העץ והאזוב
כרוכים יחד בלשון והזורית, כענין שנאמר: "ואת
עץ האזו ואת שני התולעת ואת האזוב", קיחה
אחת לשלשתן. יכול כשם שאינה בכלל אגדה בן
לא תהא בכלל טבילה? תלמוד לומר: "וטבל אותם
ואת הצפור החיה", החזיר את הצפור לכלל טבילה:
8 וישב מחוץ לאהל. מלמד שאסור בתשמיש
המטה: 9 את כל שערו וגו'. כלל ופרט וכלל, להביא

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[continued...] with tzara'at."

However, in order that our study of the To-
rah indeed elicit Divine energy and infuse it
into creation, we must study it with pure mo-
tives—fulfilling God's will and disseminating

Divine consciousness. Therefore, "he must be
brought to the priest," for the priest personifies
the *sefirah* of *chochmah*, whose inner dimension
and corresponding soul-attribute is self-nullifi-
cation (*bitul*).¹⁷

6 As for the live fowl, the priest must take it, along with the bundle comprising the cedar stick, the strip of scarlet wool, and the hyssop, and dip the bundle, along with the live fowl, into the blood of the slaughtered fowl that previously dripped onto the spring water.

7 He must then dip his finger into the solution of blood and spring water and sprinkle some of it seven times upon the back of the hand¹¹ of the person being purified from *tzara'at*, and he will thereby begin to purify him. The priest must then send away the live fowl into the open field. This fowl is permitted for consumption if it is subsequently caught.¹²

8 The person being purified must then immerse his garments in a *mikveh*, shave off all the hair on his body with a razor¹³—even those parts of the head that it is normally forbidden to shave¹⁴—and immerse himself in the water of a *mikveh*, and he will thus be purified to an additional degree, although not yet completely. After this, he may enter the camp, but he must remain 'outside his tent,' i.e., he must not engage in marital relations, for seven days.

9 On the seventh day, he must again shave off all his hair, but this time only that which is similar to the hair on his head, his beard, and his eyebrows—i.e., he must shave off all his hair from the places on his body where there is usually a visible, dense growth of hair. He must then again immerse his garments and immerse his flesh in the water of a *mikveh*, and thus be purified to an even greater degree, although still not yet completely.

10 On the eighth day, he must take two unblemished male lambs in their first year and one unblemished female lamb in its first year, in order to sacrifice them—one as an ascent-offering, one as a guilt-offering, and one as a sin-offering, respectively—as will be described presently. All three of these offerings require accompanying grain-offerings and wine-libations, even though, as you will be taught later,¹⁵ guilt-offerings and sin-offerings are not generally accompanied by grain-offerings and wine-libations. Therefore, in addition to the three animals, the person being purified must take three separate tenths of an *ephah* of fine flour, each mixed with a quarter of a *hin* of olive oil as a grain-offering to accompany each animal sacrifice, plus three quarter-hins of wine for the libations accompanying each animal sacrifice.¹⁶ In addition, he must take one log of olive oil for the purification rites, as will be presently described.

11 The priest who is performing the purification must position the person being purified, together with these things, before God, i.e., outside the entrance of the Courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. The person cannot yet actually enter the Tabernacle precincts, since he is still not completely purified of his defilement.

12 The priest must take one male lamb and bring it into the Courtyard in order to sacrifice it as a guilt-offering, along with the log of oil. Before slaughtering the lamb, he must wave them—the lamb and the oil—as a wave-offering before God.

11. *Negaim* 14:1; *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 11:1. 12. Rashi on Deuteronomy 14:11. 13. *Negaim* 14:4. 14. See 19:27, below. 15. Numbers 15:1-16. 16. *Mishneh Torah*, *Ma'aseh HaKorbanot* 2:6.

— ONKELOS —

13 ויבוס ית אמרא באַר די יבוס ית חטאתא וית עלתא באַר קדיש אַר בחטאתא אַשמא הוא לכַהֲנָא קֹדֶש קֹדֶשין הוא: 14 ויִסֵּב כַהֲנָא מִדָּמָא דְאַשְׁמָא ויתן כַהֲנָא על רום אֲדָנָא דְמִדְבִּי דִימִינָא ועל אֲלִיּוֹן יְדֵה דִימִינָא ועל אֲלִיּוֹן רַגְלָה דִימִינָא: 15 ויִסֵּב כַהֲנָא מִלְּגָא דְמִשְׁחָא ויריק על יְדָא דְכַהֲנָא דְשִׁמְלָא: 16 ויִטְבֹּל כַהֲנָא ית אַצְבָּעָה דִימִינָא מִן מִשְׁחָא דִי על יְדֵה דְשִׁמְלָא וידי מִן מִשְׁחָא באַצְבָּעָה שְׁבַע זְמָנִין קָדָם יי: 17 ומִשְׁחָא מִשְׁחָא דִי על יְדֵה יתן כַהֲנָא על רום אֲדָנָא דְמִדְבִּי דִימִינָא ועל אֲלִיּוֹן רַגְלָה דִימִינָא על דָּמָא דְאַשְׁמָא: 18 ויִשְׁתָּאֵר בְּמִשְׁחָא דִי על יְדָא דְכַהֲנָא יתן על רִישָׁא דְמִדְבִּי ויכּפֹּר עֲלוּהִי כַהֲנָא קָדָם יי: 19 ויעבֹד כַהֲנָא ית חטאתא ויכּפֹּר על דְמִדְבִּי מִסְּאוּכָתָה וּבְתֵר כֵּן יבוס ית עלתא: 20 ויִסֵּב כַהֲנָא ית עלתא וית מִנְחָתָא לְמִדְבָּחָא ויכּפֹּר עֲלוּהִי כַהֲנָא וידי: 21 ואם מִסְכֵּן הוא וְלִית יְדֵה מִדְבָּקָא ויִסֵּב אִמֵּר חַד אַשְׁמָא לְאַרְמָא לְכַפֵּר עֲלוּהִי וְעִשְׂרוֹנָא סֵלְתָא חַד דְּפִיל בְּמִשְׁחָא לְמִנְחָתָא וְלִגְא דְמִשְׁחָא:

◆ שני 13 וְשָׁחַט אֶת־הַכֶּבֶשׂ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט אֶת־הַחֲטָאתָא וְאֶת־הָעֹלָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַקֹּדֶשׁ כִּי כַחֲטָאתָא הָאֵשֶׁם הוּא לִבְהֵן קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשִׁים הוּא: 14 וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּם הָאֵשֶׁם וְנָתַן הַכֹּהֵן עַל־תֵּנוּךְ אֹזֶן הַמִּטְהָר הַיְּמִנִית וְעַל־בֶּהֱן יְדוֹ הַיְּמִנִית וְעַל־בֶּהֱן רִגְלוֹ הַיְּמִנִית: 15 וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִלֵּג הַשֶּׁמֶן וַיִּצֶק עַל־כַּף הַכֹּהֵן הַשְּׂמָאלִית: 16 וַיַּטְבֵּל הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־אֶצְבָּעוֹ הַיְּמִנִית מִן־הַשֶּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל־כַּפוֹ הַשְּׂמָאלִית וַהֲוָה מִן־הַשֶּׁמֶן בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ שֶׁבַע פַּעֲמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: 17 וּמִיֵּתֵר הַשֶּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל־כַּפוֹ יִתֵּן הַכֹּהֵן עַל־תֵּנוּךְ אֹזֶן הַמִּטְהָר הַיְּמִנִית וְעַל־בֶּהֱן יְדוֹ הַיְּמִנִית וְעַל־בֶּהֱן רִגְלוֹ הַיְּמִנִית עַל דָּם הָאֵשֶׁם: 18 וְהִנּוֹתֵר בַּשֶּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל־כַּף הַכֹּהֵן יִתֵּן עַל־רֹאשׁ הַמִּטְהָר וּכְפֹר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: 19 וְעָשָׂה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַחֲטָאתָא וּכְפֹר עַל־הַמִּטְהָר מִטְּמֵאָתוֹ וְאַחֵר יִשְׁחַט אֶת־הָעֹלָה: 20 וַהֲעֹלָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־הַמִּנְחָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַהּ וּכְפֹר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן וְיִטְהַר: ס

◆ שלישי (חמישי במחוברין) 21 וְאִם־יֵדֵל הוּא וְאִין יְדוֹ מִשְׁנֵה וְלָקַח כֶּבֶשׂ אֶחָד אֵשֶׁם לְתִנוּפָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו וְעִשְׂרוֹן סֵלֶת אֶחָד בְּלִיל בַּשֶּׁמֶן לְמִנְחָה וְלֵג שֶׁמֶן:

— RASHI —

לְגַבֵּי מִזְבֵּחַ, לְכָף נֶאֱמַר: "כִּי כַחֲטָאתָא הָאֵשֶׁם הוּא לִבְהֵן". וְכֹל יְהֵא דְמוֹ נִתֵּן לְמַעַלָּה כַחֲטָאתָא תִּלְמוּד לומר וכו', בְּתוֹרַת כֹּהֲנִים: 14 תֵּנוּךְ. גֵּדֵר אֲמִצְעֵי שְׁבָאוֹן. וְלִשׁוֹן "תֵּנוּךְ" לֹא נֹדַע לִי, וְהַפּוֹתְרִים קוֹרִים לוֹ טַנְדֵּרוֹ"ס: בֶּהֱן. גּוֹדֵל: 18 לִפְנֵי ה'. כִּנְגֵד בֵּית קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדְשִׁים: 20 וְאֵת הַמִּנְחָה. מִנְחַת נִסְכִּים שֶׁל כֹּהֲנֵיהֶם: 21 וְעִשְׂרוֹן סֵלֶת אֶחָד. לְכֶבֶשׂ זֶה, שֶׁהוּא אֶחָד, יָבִיא עֶשְׂרוֹן אֶחָד לְנִסְכָּיו: וְלֵג שֶׁמֶן. לְתֵת מִמֶּנּוּ עַל הַבְּהוֹנוֹת. וְשֶׁמֶן שֶׁל נִסְכֵי הַמִּנְחָה, לֹא הֶזְקַק הַכֹּתוּב לִפְרֹשׁ:

13 בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט וגו'. עַל גֵּרֵף הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּצִפּוֹן. וּמֵה תִּלְמוּד לומר, וְהָלֹא כֶּבֶר נֶאֱמַר בְּתוֹרַת אֵשֶׁם בְּפָרֶשֶׁת "צוֹ אֶת אֶהֱרֹן" שֶׁהָאֵשֶׁם טַעוֹן שְׁחִיטָה בְּצִפּוֹן? לִפִּי שִׁינְאָ זֶה מְכַלל אֲשָׁמוֹת לְדוֹן בְּהַעֲמָדָה, יָכוֹל תִּהְיֶה שְׁחִיטָתוֹ בַּמָּקוֹם הַעֲמָדָתוֹ, לְכָף נֶאֱמַר: "וְשָׁחַט בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט" וגו': כִּי כַחֲטָאתָא. כִּי כָּל הַחֲטָאוֹת: הָאֵשֶׁם. הִזָּה: הוּא לִבְהֵן. כָּל עֲבוֹדוֹת הַתְּלוּיוֹת בְּכֶהֱן הִזָּה אֵשֶׁם זֶה לְחֲטָאתָא. שֶׁלֹּא תֹאמַר: הוּאִיל וַיִּצָּא דְמוֹ מְכַלל שָׁאֵר אֲשָׁמוֹת לְהַנִּתֵן עַל תֵּנוּךְ וּבְהוֹנוֹת, לֹא יְהֵא טַעוֹן מִתֵּן דָּמִים וְאִמּוּרִים

1. ויקרא ז, ב. 2. חסחוס.

Thus, he must take one male lamb as a guilt-offering, first to be waved as a wave-offering, to effect atonement for him, one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as an accompanying grain-offering for the guilt-offering, a quarter-hin of wine for its accompanying libation, a log of oil for the purification rites,

- ◆ *Second Reading* 13 Even though this guilt-offering is exceptional in that it must be positioned at the entrance of the Courtyard before being slaughtered, the priest **must still slaughter the lamb in the place where one slaughters the sin-offering and the ascent-offering**, just like all guilt offerings, i.e., **within the holy place**, the Courtyard, north of the Outer Altar.¹⁸ Furthermore, despite the fact that the purification rites require special applications of this offering's blood, as will be described presently, its blood still must be applied to the Altar and its fat burned up upon the Altar, **for regarding these aspects of the priest's service, the guilt-offering—including this one—is like the sin-offering**. Nonetheless, just as the blood of other guilt-offerings is applied to the lower half of the Altar by sprinkling it at the two diagonally opposite corners—unlike the blood of sin-offerings, which is applied to the protrusions of the Altar—so is the case with this guilt-offering. **It is a sacrifice of superior holiness** like all other guilt-offerings; its blood is therefore applied to the Altar in the same way as that of all other guilt-offerings.

14 After the lamb is slaughtered, **the priest must take some of the blood of the guilt-offering, and the priest must apply it above the middle ridge of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.**

15 **The priest must then take some of the log of oil and pour it onto the priest's—i.e., his own—left palm.**

16 **The priest must then dip his right index finger into some of the oil that is on his left palm, and sprinkle some of the oil with his index finger seven times in the direction of the Holy of Holies, this being considered before God.**

17 **The priest must then apply some of the remainder of the oil that is in his palm on the middle ridge of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the places where he just applied the blood of the guilt-offering.** It does not matter if the blood is still there or if it had been wiped off in the meantime.¹⁹

18 The priest **must then apply what is left over from the oil in the priest's—i.e., his own—palm upon the head of the person being purified. The priest will thus effect partial atonement for him before God.**

19 **The priest must then offer up the female lamb as a sin-offering, thereby effecting additional atonement for the person being purified of his defilement. After this, he must slaughter the second male lamb as an ascent-offering.**

20 As opposed to the guilt-offering and the sin-offering, only parts of which are burned up on the Altar, **the priest must bring the entire ascent-offering, just like its accompanying grain-offering, up to the top of the Altar in order to burn it up there. The priests must eat their portions of the guilt- and sin-offerings. The priest will thus effect complete atonement for him, and he will be completely purified.**

Purification from Tzara'at for a Poor Person

- ◆ *Third Reading (Fifth when combined)* 21 **If he is poor and cannot afford these sacrifices, he can use fowl instead of lambs for the sin-offering and ascent-offering.**

18. Above, 7:2, 6:9, 19, etc. 19. Rashi on v. 28, below.

— ONKELOS —

22 ותריץ שפנינין או תריץ בני יונה
די תרדק ידה ויהי חד חטאתא
וחד עלתא: 23 וייתי יתהון ביומא
תמינא לאכותה לות כהנא
לתרע משפן זמנא לקדם יי:
24 ויסב כהנא ית אמרא דאשמא
וית לגא דמשחא וירם יתהון
כהנא ארמא קדם יי: 25 ויפוס ית
אמרא דאשמא ויסב כהנא מדימא
דאשמא ויתן על רום אדנא
דמדכי דימינא ועל אליון ידה
דימינא ועל אליון רגלה דימינא:
26 ומן משחא ויריק כהנא על ידא
דכהנא דשמאלא: 27 וידי כהנא
באצבעה דימינא מן משחא די
על ידה דשמאלא שבע זמנין קדם
יי: 28 ויתן כהנא מן משחא די על
ידה על רום אדנא דמדכי דימינא
ועל אליון ידה דימינא ועל אליון
רגלה דימינא על אתר דמא
דאשמא: 29 ודישתאר מן משחא
די על ידא דכהנא יתן על וישא
דמדכי לכפרא עלוהי קדם יי:
30 ויעבד ית חד מן שפנינא או מן
בני יונה מדתדבק ידה: 31 ית די
תרדק ידה ית חד חטאתא וית חד
עלתא על מנחתא ויכפר כהנא
על דמדכי קדם יי: 32 דא אורייתא
די בה מכתש סגירו די לא תדבק
ידה בדכותה: 33 ומליל יי עם
משה ועם אהרן למימר: 34 ארי
תעלו לארעא דכנען די אנא יחב
לכון לאחסנא ואמתן מכתש סגירו
בבית ארע אחסנתכון:

22 וישתי תורים או שני בני יונה אשר תשיג ידו והיה
אחד חטאת והאחד עלה: 23 והביא אתם ביום
השמיני למחרתו אל-הכהן אל-פתח אהל-מועד לפני
יהוה: 24 ולקח הכהן את-כבש האשם ואת-לג השמן
והניף אתם הכהן תנופה לפני יהוה: 25 ושחט את-
כבש האשם ולקח הכהן מדם האשם ונתן על-תנוך
אזן-המטהר הימנית ועל-כהן ידו הימנית ועל-כהן
רגלו הימנית: 26 ומן-השמן יצק הכהן על-כף הכהן
השמאלית: 27 והזה הכהן באצבעו הימנית מן-השמן
אשר על-כפו השמאלית שבע פעמים לפני יהוה:
28 ונתן הכהן מן-השמן אשר על-כפו על-תנוך אזן
המטהר הימנית ועל-כהן ידו הימנית ועל-כהן רגלו
הימנית על-מקום הם האשם: 29 והנותר מן-השמן
אשר על-כף הכהן יתן על-ראש המטהר לכפר עליו
לפני יהוה: 30 ועשה את-האחד מן-התורים או מן
בני היונה מאשר תשיג ידו: 31 את אשר-תשיג ידו
את-האחד חטאת ואת-האחד עלה על-המנחה וכפר
הכהן על המטהר לפני יהוה: 32 זאת תורת אשר-בו
נגע צרעת אשר לא-תשיג ידו במחרתו: פ

◆ רביעי (ששי במחוברין) 33 וידבר יהוה אל-משה ואל-
אהרן לאמר: 34 כי תבאו אל-ארץ כנען אשר אני נתן
לכם לאחזה ונתתלי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחוזתכם:

— RASHI —

שהנגעים באים עליהם, לפי שהטמינו אמורים
מטמוניות של זהב בקירות בתיהם, כל ארבעים
שנה שהיו ישראל במדבר, ועל ידי הנגע נותן הבית
ומוצאן:

23 ביום השמיני למחרתו. שמיני לצפרים ולהזאת
עץ ארז ואזוב ושני תולעת: 28 על מקום דם האשם.
אפלו נתקנח הדם, למד שאין הדם גורם, אלא
המקום גורם: 34 ונתתלי נגע צרעת. בשורה היא להם

God's promise to Abraham that you will dispossess them.²¹ But since, in that very promise, God stated that their dispossession will be a punishment for their sins, they also cherish the hope that God will likewise someday punish you for your

22 and two turtledoves, or two young pigeons (which are even less expensive than turtledoves), according to what he can afford, one as a sin-offering and the other as an ascent-offering.

23 He must bring them to the priest on the eighth day of his purification, to the entrance of the Courtyard of the Tent of Meeting, this being considered before God.

24 The priest must then take the guilt-offering lamb and the *log* of oil, bring them inside the Courtyard, and the priest must wave them as a wave-offering before God.

25 He must slaughter the guilt-offering lamb. The priest must then take some of the blood of the guilt-offering and apply it on the middle ridge of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

26 The priest must then pour some of the oil onto the priest's—i.e., his own—left palm.

27 The priest must sprinkle with his right index finger some of the oil that is in his left palm, seven times in the direction of the Holy of Holies, this being considered before God.

28 The priest must then apply some of the remainder of the oil that is in his palm onto the middle ridge of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the same place where he just applied the blood of the guilt-offering. It does not matter if the blood is still there or if it had been wiped off in the meantime.

29 The priest must then apply what is left over from the oil in the priest's—i.e., his own—palm upon the head of the person being purified, in order to effect partial atonement for him before God.

30 He must then offer up one of the two turtledoves or one of the two young pigeons, whichever the person being purified can afford,

31 as part of offering up both of whichever of these two types of fowl he can afford, one as a sin-offering and the other as an ascent-offering. The priest must offer up these fowl after having offered up the grain-offering accompanying the guilt-offering. The priest will thus effect atonement for the person being purified before God.

32 This is the law regarding someone suffering from a lesion of *tzara'at* but who cannot afford the full array of sacrifices when he is to be purified."

Tzara'at on Homes

- ◆ *Fourth Reading (Sixth when combined)* **33** God spoke to Moses, instructing him to convey His words²⁰ to Aaron, for him to say in turn to the Israelites in God's name, **34** "When you enter Canaan, which I am giving you as a possession, you will dispossess the nations who presently occupy the land and be able to inhabit the homes they inhabit now. Of these nations, the Amorites in particular are fully aware of

20. Rashi on 1:1, above. 21. Genesis 15:16.

— ONKELOS —

35 וַיִּיֵּתִי דְדִילָה בֵּיתָא וַיְחֻזִּי לְכַהֲנָא לְמִימָר כְּמִכְתָּשָׁא אֲתֻחוּזִי לִי בְּבֵיתָא: 36 וַיִּפְקֵד כְּהֵנָּא וַיִּפְנוּן יֵת בֵּיתָא עַד לֹא יַעוּל כְּהֵנָּא לְמַחֲזִי יֵת מִכְתָּשָׁא וְלֹא יִסְתַּאב כֹּל דִּי בְּבֵיתָא וּבְתֵר כֹּן יַעוּל כְּהֵנָּא לְמַחֲזִי יֵת בֵּיתָא: 37 וַיְחֻזִּי יֵת מִכְתָּשָׁא וְהָא מִכְתָּשָׁא בְּכַתְלֵי בֵּיתָא פִּתְחוּן יִרְקוּן אוּ סִמְקוּן וּמְחֻזִּיָּהוּ מִכִּיד מִן כְּתֵלָא:

35 וּבֹא אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַבֵּית וְהִגִּיד לַפֶּהֱן לֵאמֹר כְּנָנֶה נִרְאָה לִי בַּבֵּית: 36 וְצִוָּה הַפֶּהֱן וּפָנּוּ אֶת-הַבֵּית בְּטָרִם יָבֹא הַפֶּהֱן לְרֹאוֹת אֶת-הַנֶּנֶה וְלֹא יִטְמֵא כָּל-אֲשֶׁר בַּבֵּית וְאַחֵר כֵּן יָבֹא הַפֶּהֱן לְרֹאוֹת אֶת-הַבֵּית: 37 וְרֹאָה אֶת-הַנֶּנֶה וְהִנֵּה הַנֶּנֶה בְּקִירַת הַבֵּית שֶׁקַּעְרוּרֹת יִרְקַרְקַת אוֹ אֲדַמְדָּמֹת וּמֵרֵאִיהֶן שָׁפַל מִן-הַקִּיר:

— RASHI —

מה שבתוכו יטמא. ועל מה חסה תורה? אם על כלי שטף — יטבילם ויטהרו, ואם על אכלין ומשקין — יאכלם בימי טמאתו. הא לא חסה התורה אלא על כלי חרס, שאין להם טהרה במקוה: 37 שקערורות. שוקעות במראיהן:

35 כְּנָנֶה נִרְאָה לִי בַּבֵּית. אֲפֹלוּ תִלְמִיד חָכֵם שִׂיּוּדַע שְׂהוּא נָנֶה וְדֹא, לֹא יִפְסֵק דְּבַר בְּרוּר לוֹמַר: "נָנֶה נִרְאָה לִי", אֲלָא: "כְּנָנֶה נִרְאָה לִי": 36 בְּטָרִם יָבֹא הַפֶּהֱן וּגו'. שָׁפַל זְמַן שָׁאִין כְּהֵן נִזְקֵק לוֹ, אִין שָׁם תּוֹרַת טְמֵאָה: וְלֹא יִטְמֵא כָּל אֲשֶׁר בַּבֵּית. שָׂאֵם לֹא יִפְנֹהוּ וְיָבֹא הַפֶּהֱן וְיִרְאָה הַנֶּנֶה, נִזְקֵק לְהִסְגֵּר, וְכֹל

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

In most cases, the occupation of these homes by their new owners, God's holy people, together with the holiness of the commandments that began to be observed in these homes (beginning with the fastening of *mezuzot* to their doorposts³²) was enough to dispel the absorbed evil. If, however, the former inhabitants were especially depraved—even by Canaanite standards—the introduction of Jewish holiness into their homes was not sufficient to rid these homes of their evil ambiance; these homes had to be partially or wholly demolished. They therefore broke out in *tzara'at*.

It thus follows that it was specifically the most depraved of the Canaanites who hid their gold in the walls of their homes. Indeed, it stands to reason that only the worst Canaanites would not resign themselves to God's plan for the Jewish people to take possession of the land and stubbornly harbor hopes of eventually driving them out.

It further follows that Divine providence also arranged that the exceptionally righteous Jews be drawn to inhabit specifically the homes of the most depraved Canaanites. This, too, stands to reason, for the preternatural evil internalized in these homes could only be outmatched by the preternatural righteousness of these individuals (through the outbreak of *tzara'at* that affected them specifically).³³

This pairing of the highest levels of holiness with the lowest levels of evil is in fact characteristic of *tzara'at* in general. As we have noted,³⁴ the reper-

cussions of contracting *tzara'at* are the most severe of all types of ritual impurity, necessitating ostracism from society. On the other hand, the purpose of *tzara'at* is to purify the individual to a degree unattainable by human effort, and therefore, this affliction is "awarded" only to those who have spiritually refined themselves to the maximum extent humanly possible.

In other words: As we have seen,³⁵ sincere repentance (*teshuvah*) elevates us to degrees of Divine consciousness inaccessible to wholly righteous individuals. Thus, *tzara'at* enables the wholly righteous to achieve the closeness to God normally reserved for the penitent.

Although this dynamic characterizes *tzara'at* in general, it is most evident in the *tzara'at* of homes, where the sufferer's reward is openly manifest in the form of his sudden accrual of worldly wealth. The reason for this is that, as has been pointed out above,³⁶ of the three "venues" for *tzara'at*—skin, clothing, and home—the home is the most external, and is therefore the physical correlate of the most sublime aspect of the soul, which is the most removed from our normative consciousness. This is the quintessential core of the soul, termed the *yechidah* ("unique one"),³⁷ whose consciousness is entirely that of being one with God. It is from the perspective of this level of the soul, which is synonymous with God's own perspective, that the true nature of *tzara'at*—a gift-tool for transcendent spiritual refinement—is most evident.³⁸

32. Deuteronomy 6:9, 11:20. 33. See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 249-250, vol. 3, p. 1016d. 34. On 13:2, above. 35. On Genesis 2:17-18. 36. On v. 2. 37. See on Exodus 30:2. 38. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 107-114.

sins and exile you from the land, at which time they will be free to repossess it and move back into their homes. Thus, some of them²² have been stashing their gold in the walls of their houses ever since you left Egypt.²³ Therefore, do not fret when I **place a *tzara'at*-lesion upon a house in the land of your possession**, for even if, on that account, you are forced to demolish your house, you will thereby reveal these hidden treasures and gain considerable wealth.

35 When a lesion appears on a house, **the owner of the house must come and tell the priest** about it, **saying, 'Something resembling a lesion has appeared on my house.'** Even if the owner is familiar with the signs of *tzara'at* and is sure that the lesion is *tzara'at*, he must not state this fact decisively; rather, he must leave that to the priest.

36 **The priest must order that the house be cleared out before he, the priest, comes inside to examine the lesion, so that everything in the house not become ritually defiled** if he indeed pronounces the lesion to be *tzara'at*, for even if the lesion is *tzara'at*, nothing in the house becomes defiled until the priest pronounces it to be so. True, the wooden or metal utensils in the house can later be purified of ritual defilement by immersing them in a *mikveh*, and the food in the house can be consumed by someone who happens to be defiled at the time. However, as you know, earthenware vessels cannot be purified of ritual defilement by immersion,²⁴ so once these become ritually defiled, they may never again be used for ritually undefiled food. It is therefore for the sake of these vessels that the house must be emptied out. The repercussions of the ritual defilement contracted by a house afflicted with *tzara'at* or quarantined for suspected *tzara'at* are the same as those for the ritual defilement of a man who has suffered two or more discrete non-seminal discharges²⁵ (which will be discussed in detail later²⁶).

After this, the priest must come to examine the house.

37 **He must examine the lesion. If the lesion on the walls of the house** (a) appears on the stones of the walls,²⁷ (b) covers at least an area equivalent to a rectangle two of whose sides are equal to the diameter of a Cilician bean and whose two other sides are equal to twice the diameter of a Cilician bean²⁸ [308 mm² or 0.48 in²], and (c) **consists of pure green or pure red sunken-looking stains** (or stains of a mixture of both colors²⁹), **appearing to be deeper than the wall,**

— ❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧ —

34 Do not fret: As stated, only some—probably only a small fraction—of the Canaanites hid their gold in the walls of their homes before being driven out of them. It was these houses that were eventually stricken with *tzara'at*, in order to enable their new Jewish owners to inherit these Canaanites' hidden gold. Since, as we have noted, *tzara'at* only affected the homes of exceptionally righteous individuals—who needed *tzara'at* to help them purge themselves

of their last, subtlest character imperfections—it follows that Divine providence arranged that specifically these individuals settled in the homes that contained these hidden treasures.

According to the *Zohar*,³⁰ there was an additional reason why *tzara'at* broke out on the walls of certain homes: The Canaanites were idolaters of such exceptional moral corruption³¹ that their spiritual depravity seeped into the very walls of their homes.

²² *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 108. ²³ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 91-97. ²⁴ Above, 11:33-35. ²⁵ *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 16:1. ²⁶ Below, 15:4-12. ²⁷ *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 14:7. ²⁸ *Sifra*, *Metzora*, *parashah* 6:1; *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 14:1. ²⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 14:2. ³⁰ 3:50a. ³¹ See below, 18:3.

— ONKELOS —

38 ויפוק כהנא מן ביתא לתרע
ביתא ויסגר ית ביתא שבועא יומין:
39 ויתוב כהנא ביומא שביעאה
ויחזי והא אוסף מכתשא בכתלי
ביתא: 40 ויפקד כהנא וישלפון
ית אבניא די בהן מכתשא וירמוז
יתון למברא לקרתא לאתר
מסאב: 41 וית ביתא קלפון מגו
סחור סחור וירמוז ית עפרא די
קליפו למברא לקרתא לאתר
מסאב: 42 ויסבון אבנין אחרנין
ויעלון באתר אבניא ועפר אחרן
יסב וישוע ית ביתא: 43 ואם
יתוב מכתשא ויסגי בביתא בתר
דשליפו ית אבניא ובתר דקליפו
ית ביתא ובתר דאתשע: 44 ויעול
כהנא ויחזי והא אוסף מכתשא
בביתא סגירות מחסרא היא
בביתא מסאב הוא:

38 ויצא הכהן מן הבית אל־פתח הבית והסגיר את־
הבית שבעת ימים: 39 ושב הכהן ביום השביעי וראה
והנה פשה הנגע בקירת הבית: 40 וצוה הכהן וחלצו
את־האבנים אשר בהן הנגע והשליכו אתהן אל־מחוץ
לעיר אל־מקום טמא: 41 ואת־הבית יקצע מקצע סביב
ושפכו את־העפר אשר הקצו אל־מחוץ לעיר אל־
מקום טמא: 42 ולקחו אבנים אחרות והביאו אל־תחת
האבנים ועפר אחר יקח וטח את־הבית: 43 ואם־ישוב
הנגע ופרח בבית אחר חליץ את־האבנים ואחרי הקצות
את־הבית ואחרי הטוח: 44 ובא הכהן וראה והנה פשה
הנגע בבית צרעת ממארת הוא בבית טמא הוא:

— RASHI —

פשה. אם כן, מה תלמוד לומר: "והנה פשה"? אין
כאן מקומו של מקרא זה, אלא "ונתן את הבית"
היה לו לכתב אחר: "ואם ישוב הנגע", "וראה והנה
פשה", הא לא בא ללמד אלא על גגע העומד
בעיניו בשבוע ראשון ובא בסוף שבוע שני ומצאו
שפשה, שלא פרש בו הכתוב למעלה כלום בעומד
בעיניו בשבוע ראשון, ולמדך כאן בפשיון זה, שאינו
מדבר אלא בעומד בראשון ופשה בשני. ומה יעשה
לזו? יכול יתצנו, כמו שסמך לו: "ונתן את הבית"?
תלמוד לומר: "ושב הכהן", "ובא הכהן", נלמד
ביאה משיבה — מה שיבה חולץ וקוצה וטח ונתן
לו שבוע, אף ביאה חולץ וקוצה וטח ונתן לו שבוע,
ואם חזר — נותן, לא חזר — טהור. ומנין שאם עמד
בזה ובזה, חולץ וקוצה וטח ונתן לו שבוע? תלמוד
לומר: "ובא", "ואם בא יבא", במה הכתוב מדבר?
אם בפושה בראשון — הרי כבר אמור, אם בפושה
בשני — הרי כבר אמור. הא, אינו אומר "ובא",
"ואם בא יבא", אלא את שבא בסוף שבוע ראשון,
ובא בסוף שבוע שני "וראה והנה לא פשה". זה

40 וחלצו את האבנים. בתרגומו: "וישלפון" — וטלו
משם, כמו: "וחלצה נעלו", לשון הסרה: אל מקום
טמא. מקום שאין טהרות משתמשות שם, למדך
הכתוב שהאבנים הללו מטמאות מקומן בעודן
בו: 41 יקצע. רודוניי"ר בלעז, ובלשון משנה יש
הרבה: מבית. מבפנים: סביב. סביבות הנגע. בתורת
כהנים נדרש כן, שיקלף הטיח שסביב אבני הנגע:
הקצו. לשון קצה, אשר קצעו בקצות הנגע סביב:
43 הקצות. לשון העשות, וכן "הטוח". אבל "חליץ"
את האבנים, מוסב הלשון על האדם שחלצן, והוא
משקל לשון כבד, כמו: "כפר", "דבר": ואם ישוב
הנגע וגו'. יכול חזר בו ביום, והא טמא? תלמוד
לומר: "ושב הכהן", "ואם ישוב" — מה "שיבה"
האמורה להלן לסוף שבוע, אף "שיבה" האמורה
כאן בסוף שבוע: 44 ובא הכהן וראה והנה פשה.
יכול לא יהא החוזר טמא אלא אם כן פשה? נאמר:
"צרעת ממארת" בבתים, ונאמר: "צרעת ממארת"
בבגדים. מה להלן טמא את החוזר אף על פי שאינו
פושה, אף כאן טמא את החוזר אף על פי שאינו

3. דברים כה, ט. 4. לפרסם, להקציע. 5. פסוק לט. 6. פסוק מח.

time week.⁴⁴ If the *tzara'at* returns after this third week, this indicates conclusively that it is an onerous *tzara'at*-lesion in the house; the house is defiled.

44. Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at 15:1.

38 then the priest must go out of the house, to the entrance of the house, and he must quarantine the house for seven days (see Figure 1, p. 119).

39 Then the priest must return on the seventh day and examine the house. If the lesion has disappeared or turned a lighter or darker shade of red or green, the affected area must be scraped and the priest must then pronounce the house rid of this defilement.³⁹

If, however, **the lesion has spread on the walls of the house**, the house must be purged, as follows:

40 The priest must order that the stones upon which the lesion is found be removed, and those who remove them **must dispose of them outside the city, to a designated place** that either already is or that will thereby become **defiled**. As long as defiled stones are in this place, anyone who enters it will become defiled.

41 In addition to removing the affected stones, the workers **must scrape out the house from the inside**, but only **all around** the vicinity of the removed stones. **They must pour out the mortar dust that they removed outside the city—specifically, into a defiled place**, as they did with the stones.

42 They must then take other, unaffected stones and bring them to replace the removed stones. One of the workers **must take other mortar dust, and plaster** the new stones into the wall of **the house**.

43 After this purging process, the house must be quarantined for another week. The seventh day of the first quarantine week also counts as the first day of the second quarantine week.⁴⁰ **If, after this, the lesion erupts again in the house—after the workers had removed the stones, and after the wall of the house had been scraped around the area of the removed stones, and after the wall had been repaired and re-plastered—the house must be demolished, as will be described presently.**⁴¹ If the lesion does not reappear, the priest must declare the house rid of this defilement and purify it by means of the procedure that will be described later.⁴²

44 As stated, the priest must examine the house after the first week of quarantine. If the lesion did not spread during the first week of quarantine, **the priest must quarantine the house for a second week, after which he must come and examine it again.** If the lesion has disappeared or turned a lighter or darker shade of red or green, the affected area must be removed and the priest must then pronounce the house rid of this defilement and proceed to purify it according to the process that will be described later.⁴³

If, however, **the lesion in the house spread** during the second week, the affected stones must be removed, the area around them scraped, all that was removed deposited in a place designated for defilement outside the city, the wall re-plastered with unaffected stones, and the house quarantined for a third week. The seventh day of the second quarantine week also counts as the first day of the third quaran-

39. *Negaim* 13:1; *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 15:2. 40. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 15:1. 41. *In v.* 45. 42. *Vv.* 49-53. 43. *Vv.* 49-53. *Negaim* 13:1.

— ONKELOS —

45 ויתרע ית ביתא ית אבנודי וית אעודי וית כל עפר ביתא ויפק למקרא לקרמא לאתר מסאב: 46 ודיעול לביתא כל יומין דיסגר תה יהי מסאב עד רמשא: 47 ודישכוב בביתא יצבע ית לבושוהי ודייכול בביתא יצבע ית לבושוהי: 48 ואם מעל ייעול בהנא ויחזי והא לא אוסף מכתשא בביתא בחר דאתשע ית ביתא וידכי בהנא ית ביתא ארי אתסי מכתשא: 49 ויטב לדכא ית ביתא תרתין צפרין ואעא דארנא וצבע ודורי ואזובא:

45 ונתין את־הבית את־אבניו ואת־עציו ואת כל־עפר הבית והוציא אל־מחויץ לעיר אל־מקום טמא: 46 והבא אל־הבית כל־ימי הסגר אתו יטמא עד־הערב: 47 והשכב בבית יכבס את־בגדיו והאכל בבית יכבס את־בגדיו: 48 ואם־בא יבא הכהן וראה והנה לא־פשה הנגע בבית אחרי הטח את־הבית וטהר הכהן את־הבית כי נרפא הנגע: 49 ולקח לחמא את־הבית שתי צפרים ועץ ארו ושני תולעת ואזב:

— RASHI —

מקרא: "וטהר הכהן את הבית?" תלמוד לומר: "כי נרפא הנגע", לא טהרתי אלא את הרפוי, ואין רפוי אלא הבית שהקצה והוסיח ולא חזר הנגע. אבל זה, טעון חליצה וקצוי וטיחה ושבע שלישי. וכן המקרא נדרש: "ואם בא יבא בשני, וראה והנה לא פשה", וטיחנו, ואין טיחה בלא חלוץ וקצוי. "ואחרי הטוח את הבית, וטהר הכהן את הבית", אם לא חזר לסוף השבוע, "כי נרפא הנגע". ואם חזר, כבר פרש על החזור שטעון נתיצה: 46 כל ימי הסגר אתו. ולא ימים שקלף את נגעו. יכול שאני מוציא המחלט שקלף את נגעו? תלמוד לומר: "כל ימי: יטמא עד הערב. מלמד שאין מטמא בגדים. יכול אפלו שהה בכדי אכילת פרס? תלמוד לומר: "והאכל בבית יכבס את בגדיו". אין לי אלא אוכל, שוכב מניין תלמוד לומר "והשכב". אין לי אלא אוכל ושוכב, לא אוכל ולא שוכב מניין? תלמוד לומר: "וכבס", "וכבס", רבה. אם כן למה נאמר: "אכל ושכב"? לתן שעור לשוכב כדי אכילת פרס:

העומד מה יעשה לו? יכול יפטר וילך, כמו שכתוב כאן: "וטהר הכהן את הבית?" תלמוד לומר: "כי נרפא הנגע", לא טהרתי אלא את הרפוי. מה יעשה לו? "ביאה" אמונה למעלה ו"ביאה" אמונה למטה. מה בעליונה חולץ וקוצה וטח ונותן לו שבוע, דגמר לה "זהו שיבה, זהו ביאה", אף בתחתונה כן וכו'. כדאיתא בתורת כהנים. גמרו של דבר: אין נתיצה, אלא בנגע החוזר אחר חליצה וקצוי וטיחה, ואין החוזר צריך פשיון. וסדר המקראות כך הוא: "ואם ישוב", "ונתין", "והבא אל הבית", "והאכל בבית", "ובא הכהן וראה והנה פשה", ודבר הכתוב בעומד בראשון, שנותן לו שבוע שני להסגרו, ובסוף שבוע שני להסגרו בא וראהו שפשה. ומה יעשה לו? חולץ וקוצה וטח ונותן לו שבוע. חזר — נותין, לא חזר — טעון צפרים, שאין בנגעים יותר משלשה שבועות. "ואם בא יבא" לסוף שבוע שני, "וראה והנה לא פשה", מקרא זה בא ללמד בעומד בעיניו בראשון ובשני, מה יעשה לו? יכול יטהרנו, כמשמעו של

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Parashat Metzora —

- The purification process for *tzara'at* on the skin (14:1-32).
- The diagnostic process for *tzara'at* on homes and its purification (14:33-57).

We see that the rules for the diagnosis and purification of *tzara'at* on the skin are not only separated into discontinuous sections but appear in two

separate *parashiot*, whereas the rules for *tzara'at* on homes are given together, in one sequence (similar to the rules of *tzara'at* on clothing, which are given together simply because the rules for their purification are not complex enough to warrant being given separately).

The reason for this dichotomy is that, as we have seen,⁴⁹ the home, being the most external of the three "venues" for *tzara'at* — skin, clothing, and home — is

49. On v. 34, above.

45 He must demolish the house, its stones, its wood, and all the mortar-dust of the house, and he must take them outside the city, to a defiled place.

46 Anyone entering the house during any of the days of one of its ‘initial’ quarantines—i.e., a quarantine that is not preceded by purging—will become ritually defiled until the evening.

47 The garments that this person is wearing, however, do not become ritually defiled unless **he lies down in the house** or otherwise tarries there, in which case **he must immerse his garments** in a *mikveh*—but only if he tarries **in the house** for the amount of time usually taken by **someone eating** half a loaf of bread (approximately 4 minutes⁴⁵). Only in such a case **must he immerse his garments** in a *mikveh*.

In contrast, a person who enters the house during a ‘successional’ quarantine—i.e., one that is preceded by purging—is not rendered ritually defiled. Nonetheless, anyone entering a house that has been declared defiled becomes ritually defiled, even if for some reason the house was purged before being demolished.

48 If the priest comes and examines the house after the first week of quarantine and finds that the *tzara’at*-lesion has not spread, **and** then, after having the house quarantined for a second week, the priest **comes again and examines** the lesion a second time, **and the lesion again did not spread in the house from the time that the house had been re-plastered** at the end of the first week, then the procedure to be followed is the same as if the lesion had spread during the second week of quarantine: the affected stones must be removed, the area around them scraped, all that was removed deposited in a place designated for defilement outside the city, the wall re-plastered with unaffected stones, and the house quarantined for a third week. If the lesion reappears after this, the house is defiled and must be demolished. If the lesion does not reappear after the third week of quarantine, **the priest must pronounce the house rid of this defilement, because the lesion has healed.**

49 To ritually purify the house, he must take the same items as must a person being purified from *tzara’at*:⁴⁶ **two fowl, a cedar stick, a strip of scarlet wool, and some hyssop.** The cedar stick and hyssop must be bound together using the strip of scarlet wool.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

41 In order to purify the house: The elaborate purification ritual for a house that has contracted *tzara’at* is quite similar to that for a person who has contracted *tzara’at* on his skin.⁴⁷ In contrast, the purification process for an article of clothing that has contracted *tzara’at* is quite perfunctory: simple immersion in a *mikveh* suffices.⁴⁸ This similarity between skin- and house-*tzara’at* (as emphasized by their shared dissimilarity to clothing-*tzara’at*) leads us to expect that the presentation of their laws

should be likewise similar. Conspicuously, however, their respective laws are presented quite differently, as is revealed if we analyze the order in which the Torah presents the subject matter of *tzara’at*:

Parashat Tazria—

- The diagnostic process for *tzara’at* on the skin (13:1-46).
- The diagnostic process for *tzara’at* on clothing (and its purification) (13:47-59).

45. *Shiurei Torah* 15 (p. 203); *Kuntres HaShiurim* 18 (p. 16); *Shiurei Tzion* 9 (p. 70). 46. Above, v. 4. 47. Above, 14:1-32. 48. Above, 13:58.

— ONKELOS —

50 ויבוס ית צפרא חדא למן
דחסף על מי מבוע: 51 ויסב ית
אעא דארזא וית אזורא וית צבע
זהורי וית צפרא חיתא ויטבול
יתהון בדמא דצפרא דנכיסא
ובמי מבוע וידי לביתא שבע זמני:
52 וידפי ית ביתא בדמא דצפרא
ובמי מבוע ובצפרא חיתא ובאעא
דארזא ובאזורא ובצבע וזהרי:
53 וישלח ית צפרא חיתא למבא
לקרתא לאפי חקלא ויכפר על
ביתא וידפי: 54 דא אורייתא
לכל מכתש סגירותא ולנתקא:
55 ולסגירות לבושא ולביתא:
56 ולעמקא ולעדיא ולבהרא:
57 לאלפא ביום מסאבא וביום
דכיזא דא אורייתא דסגירותא:
15:1 ומליל יי עם משה ועם אהרן
למימר: 2 מלילו עם בני ישראל
ותימרון להון גבר גבר ארי יהי
דאיב מבשרה דובה מסאב הוא:

50 וישחט את־הצפר האחת אל־כל־חריש על־מים
חיים: 51 ולקח את־עין־הארז ואת־האזב ואת־שני
התולעת ואת־הצפר החיה וטבל אתם בדם הצפר
השחוט ובים החיים והזה אל־הבית שבע פעמים:
52 וחטא את־הבית בדם הצפור ובים החיים ובצפר
החיה ובעין הארז ובאזב ובשני התולעת: 53 ושלח
את־הצפר החיה אל־מחוז לעיר אל־פני השדה וכפר
על־הבית וטהר:

◆ חמישי 54 זאת התורה לכל־נגע הצרעת ולנתק:
55 ולצרעת הפגד ולבית: 56 ולשאת ולספחת
ולבהרת: 57 להורת ביום הטמא וביום הטהר זאת
תורת הצרעת: פ

15:1 וידבר יהוה אל־משה ואל־אהרן לאמר: 2 דברו
אל־בני ישראל ואמרתם אליהם איש איש כי יהיה זב
מבשרו זובו טמא הוא:

— RASHI —

הזב, ממקום שמשמא טמאה קלה — קרי, מטמא
טמאה חמורה — זיבה: זובו טמא. למד על הטפה
שהיא מטמאה. "זוב" דומה למי בצק של שעורין
ודחוי, ודומה ללכן ביצה המוורת. "שכבת זרע"
קשור, ללכן ביצה שאינה מוורת:

57 להורת ביום הטמא וגו'. איזה יום מטהרו ואיזה
יום מטמאו: 2 כי יהיה זב. יכול זב מכל מקום יהא
טמא? תלמוד לומר: "מבשרו", ולא כל בשרו. אחר
שחלק הכתוב בין בשר לבשר, וכתיב לדיון, טמא בזב
וטמא בזבה: מה זבה, ממקום שהיא מטמאה טמאה
קלה — נדה, מטמאה טמאה חמורה — זיבה, אף

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appears more as the severe form of ritual impurity it is. From this perspective, the experiential side of *tzara'at* and its potential as a tool for spiritual refinement are entirely separate, and therefore these aspects of it are treated in separate sections of the Torah. *Tzara'at* of homes is covered in one contiguous section because in it the experiential aspect of this condition is most openly seen in the context of its beneficial purpose.

With this perspective in mind, we can understand that the purpose of the destruction of God's

"house," the Temple, was⁵² in order to reveal the "hidden treasures" of Divine consciousness that will be manifest with the restoration of the Temple in the messianic Redemption.⁵³

2 Discharges originating in the reproductive organs: These types of ritual impurity serve to remind us how much our lives are a product of the events that occurred at the dawn of human history—the incident with the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden—and how we must continually strive to

52. *Vayikra Rabbah* 17:7; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 197 ff. 53. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 107-114.

50 He must slaughter one fowl such that its blood drip **into an earthenware vessel** and **onto spring water** that has been placed in that vessel.

51 He must take the bundle comprising **the cedar stick, the hyssop, and the strip of scarlet wool, plus the live fowl, and he must dip them into the blood of the slaughtered fowl and into the spring water.** He must then dip his finger into the solution of blood and spring water and **sprinkle** some of it **toward the house seven times.**

52 He must thus purify the house using the blood of the fowl, the spring water, the live fowl, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the strip of scarlet wool.

53 He must then send away the live fowl outside the city, into the open field. He will thus effect atonement for the house, and it will be purified from defilement.

◆ *Fifth Reading* **54 All this is the law for every lesion of tzara'at, for a netek,**

55 for tzara'at of garments and houses,

56 for a wool-white spot, for an egg-membrane-white or lime-white spot, and for a snow-white spot—

57 by which the priest is required **to render decisions regarding** on which **day** in the process of the sufferer's diagnosis or purification process he can be pronounced **defiled** and on which **day** he can be pronounced **rid of this defilement.** **This is the law of tzara'at."**

Defilement Contracted by Males via Abnormal Discharges

15:1 God spoke to Moses, instructing him to convey His words⁵⁰ **to Aaron, saying,**
2 "Speak to the Israelites, and say to them, 'The following are the laws governing ritual defilement from discharges originating in the reproductive organs.

If any man has a discharge of a specific type of non-seminal fluid **from** the orifice of **his reproductive organ**—this fluid being similar in consistency to the liquid that exudes from barley dough and similar in color to the white of an egg that was incubated so long that it will no longer hatch⁵¹—**his discharge is itself ritually defiled** and renders anyone who touches it ritually defiled.

	Non-Seminal Discharge	Seminal Discharge
Consistency	watery	viscous
Color	white of a spoiled egg	white of a sound egg

Figure 2. Differences between Defiling non-Seminal and Seminal Discharges

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the physical correlate of the *yechidah*, the aspect of the soul most removed from our normative consciousness. It is specifically from the perspective of this level of the soul that *tzara'at* is clearly seen as

a tool for spiritual refinement. From the perspective of the lower levels of the soul, which define our normative consciousness and whose physical correlates are our clothing and bodies, *tzara'at* ap-

50. Rashi on 1:1, above. 51. Rashi on *Chulin* 12:3 (140b, in commentary of Rabbeinu Nisim).

— ONKELOS —

3 וְדָא תְּהִי סְאוּבְתָה בְּדוּבָה
רִיר בְּשֶׁרָה יֵת דּוּבָה אוּ חֲתִים
בְּשֶׁרָה מְדוּבָה סְאוּבְתָה הִיא:
4 כָּל מִשְׁכָּבָא דִּי יִשְׁכּוּב עֲלוּהִי
דּוֹבְנָא יְהִי מִסָּאב וְכָל מְנָא דִּיתִיב
עֲלוּהִי יְהִי מִסָּאב: 5 וְגִבְרִי דִּי יִקְרַב
בְּמִשְׁכָּבָה יַעֲבֹד לְבוּשׁוֹהִי וְיִסְחִי
בְּמִנָּא וְיְהִי מִסָּאב עַד רְמִשָּׂא:

3 וְזֹאת תִּהְיֶה טְמֵאתוֹ בְּזוּבוֹ רַר בְּשָׁרוֹ אֶת־זוּבוֹ אוֹ-
הַחֲתִים בְּשָׁרוֹ מְזוּבוֹ טְמֵאתוֹ הוּא: 4 כָּל־הַמִּשְׁכָּב
אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב עָלָיו הִזָּב יִטְמָא וְכָל־הַכְּלִי אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׁב עָלָיו
יִטְמָא: 5 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִגַּע בְּמִשְׁכָּבוֹ יִכְבֶּם בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֲצֵן
בְּמִים וְיִטְמָא עַד־הָעֶרֶב:

— RASHI —

לְמִשְׁכָּב. יָכוֹל אָפְלוּ מִיָּחִיד לְמִלָּאכָה אַחֲרֶת? תִּלְמוּד
לומֵר: "אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב" — "אֲשֶׁר שָׁכַב" לֹא נֶאֱמַר, אֶלָּא
"אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב", הַמִּיָּחִיד תָּמִיד לְכָף, יֵצֵא זֶה שְׁאוּמְרִים
לוֹ: עֵמֶד וְנַעֲשֶׂה מִלָּאכְתָּנוּ: אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׁב. "יִשָּׁב" לֹא
נֶאֱמַר, אֶלָּא "אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׁב עָלָיו הִזָּב" — בְּמִיָּחִיד תָּמִיד
לְכָף: 5 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִגַּע בְּמִשְׁכָּבוֹ. לְמַד עַל הַמִּשְׁכָּב
שֶׁחֲמוּר מִן הַמְּגַע, שֶׁזֶה נַעֲשֶׂה אֵב הַטְּמֵאָה לְטִמָּא
אָדָם לְטִמָּא בְּגָדִים, וְהַמְּגַע שְׁאִינוֹ מִשְׁכָּב, אִינוֹ אֶלָּא
וְלֹד הַטְּמֵאָה, וְאִינוֹ מִטְמָא אֶלָּא אֶכְלִין וּמִשְׁקִין:

3 רַר. לְשׁוֹן רִיר שָׁזָב אֶת בְּשָׁרוֹ: אֵת זוּבוֹ. כִּמוֹ רִיר,
שִׁיּוּצָא צָלוּל: אוֹ הַחֲתִים. שִׁיּוּצָא עַב וְסוּתָם אֶת
פִּי הָאֵמָה, וְנִסְתָּם בְּשָׁרוֹ מִטְפַּת זוּבוֹ. וְהוּוּ פְּשׁוּטוֹ.
וּמִדְּרָשׁוֹ: מִנֵּה הַכְּתוּב הָרִאשׁוֹן רֵאיוֹת שְׁתֵּים וּקְרָאוּ
"טְמָא", שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "זָב מִבְּשָׁרוֹ זוּבוֹ טְמָא הוּא", וּמִנֵּה
הַכְּתוּב הַשֵּׁנִי רֵאיוֹת שְׁלֹשׁ וּקְרָאוּ "טְמָא", שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
"טְמֵאתוֹ בְּזוּבוֹ, רַר בְּשָׁרוֹ אֵת זוּבוֹ אוֹ הַחֲתִים בְּשָׁרוֹ
מְזוּבוֹ, טְמֵאתוֹ הוּא", הֵא כִּיצַד? שְׁתֵּים לְטִמָּאָה,
וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁית מִזְּקִיקָתוֹ לְקֶרְבֵּן: 4 כָּל הַמִּשְׁכָּב. הָרִאיוֹ

7. מגילה ח, א.

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genuinely altruistic love for our fellow creatures.

Nonetheless, none of us can extricate ourselves from our fallen perspective completely; this will occur only when God "causes the spirit of impurity to pass away from the earth."⁵⁷ The sages therefore inform us that even the select few who attained the greatest spiritual refinement possible in the present order of creation still had to die, for no reason other than the bite of the primordial snake.⁵⁸

Objectifying another human being can thus be seen as the ultimate and archetypal sin, the epitome of the evil that opposes the world's progress toward redemption. In this context, we can understand the critical importance the Torah attaches to how we harness our carnal desires. There is no human activity that can produce pleasure comparable to that produced by carnal intimacy and release; it is therefore paramount that we experience this pleasure—as far as possible—only in the course of making another person the subject of the experience (by striving to grant them pleasure) rather than in objectifying them (by using them as a means to derive pleasure for ourselves). Therefore, the Torah insists that the only permitted form of seminal emission is that in which a husband inseminates

his wife—and even then, he is required to focus on her pleasure rather than his own. Any other type of seminal emission serves to objectify womankind in the man's perspective, and is therefore antithetical to the essence of redemption and contributes to the prolongation of the exile.

A man is therefore rendered ritually defiled by any emission from his procreative organ that results from carnal desire. There are two types of such emissions: seminal and non-seminal. Seminal emissions are the result of a natural carnal drive; they render a man ritually defiled to a limited extent, as we will see.⁵⁹ Even permitted seminal emissions render a husband ritually defiled, since, as just stated, it is impossible not to experience at least some pleasure in marital relations; indeed, it is necessary for the husband to enjoy marital relations in order to please his wife—so that she can see that he desires her company. Thus, paradoxically, even though the Torah all but insists that the husband experience this pleasure, he becomes ritually defiled thereby, for even the smallest iota of self-awareness separates us from God, even if subtly.

Non-seminal emissions, in contrast, are the result

57. Par. Zachariah 13:2. 58. Shabbat 55b; Bava Batra 17a. 59. Vv. 16-18, below. 60. Sukah 52b; Sotah 107a.

3 In addition, the man experiencing the discharge will also become ritually defiled. **This is** how he will contract ritual **defilement due to his discharge**: either if **his reproductive organ runs freely with his discharge** or if **his reproductive organ is plugged up by his discharge** because the discharge is somewhat more viscous.

The law pertaining to a man who has only one discharge will be given below.⁵⁴ If a man has two or more discrete discharges, **his defilement is** sufficient to render him ritually impure to the following degree:

4 **Any object intended for reclining upon, upon which the man with the discharge lies will thereby become defiled; and any object intended for sitting upon, upon which he sits will thereby become defiled.**

5 This is the nature of the defilement that these objects acquire through contact with the man with the discharge:

It was mentioned previously⁵⁵ that only food and drink contract ritual defilement indirectly; people and implements do not. The exception to this is when the medium of transmission is an object upon which a man suffering from a discharge has reclined or sat. Such objects transmit ritual defilement even to people and implements (including garments), as follows:

Anyone who touches an object that the man with the discharge reclined upon, or reclines on such an object even without touching it (for example, by reclining upon any number of ritually undefiled blankets that are spread over a bed upon which the man with the discharge reclined), becomes ritually defiled. In addition, any garments that this person is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him also become ritually defiled. **He must** therefore **immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain ritually defiled until evening**, at which time he and his garments will become rid of this defilement.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

reverse the results of these events until reality is consummately spiritually healed, with the final, messianic Redemption.

We have seen⁵⁶ how Adam and Eve's eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge resulted in the descent of reality into a comprehensive materiality that obscures the Divine energy continuously creating it. This hiding of Divinity makes us acutely aware of our own existence, causing us to feel separate from God and even so unaware of His existence that it is possible to deny it. Our intensely subjective perspective also encourages us to objectify all other human beings (as well as all other creatures in general). Were we to be aware—as we were before the primordial sin—of the Divine reality that constantly

creates all creation, we would be hardly conscious of ourselves as independent beings, and certainly not consider our own existence and interests worthy of any more of our attention than those of any other creature. But our acquired subjectivity—the existential “venom” of the primordial snake—locks us into an objectifying perspective on reality that we must do our best to overcome.

And indeed, the Torah assures us that we can overcome it to a great extent. This is the ultimate purpose of the study of the Torah and the observance of all its commandments, which together are capable of purifying and raising our consciousness to levels of almost angelic innocence, freeing us from the shackles of self-awareness and enabling us to feel

54. V. 32. 55. Above, 11:34. 56. On Genesis 2:17-18.

— ONKELOS —

6 וְהִישָׁב עַל־הַכְּלִי אֲשֶׁר־יֵשֵׁב עָלָיו הַזֶּבֶב יִכְבֶּם בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֲוֵן בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 7 וְהִנֵּנֶנָּה בְּבִשָּׁר הַזֶּבֶב יִכְבֶּם בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֲוֵן בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 8 וְכִי־יֵרָק הַזֶּבֶב בַּטְּהוֹר וִכְבֶּם בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֲוֵן בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 9 וְכִלְה־מִרְכָּב אֲשֶׁר יִרְכַּב עָלָיו הַזֶּבֶב יִטָּמָא: 10 וְכִלְה־הַנֶּנֶנָּה בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה תַּחְתָּיו יִטָּמָא עַד־הָעֶרֶב וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא אוֹתָם יִכְבֶּם בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֲוֵן בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב:

— RASHI —

10 וְכִלְה־הַנֶּנֶנָּה בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה תַּחְתָּיו. שֶׁל זֶבֶב. בָּא וְלָמַד עַל הַמִּרְכָּב שֶׁיִּהְיֶה הַנּוֹנֵעַ בּוֹ טָמֵא, וְאֵין טְעוֹן כְּבוֹס בְּגָדִים, וְהוּא חָמֵר בַּמִּשְׁכָּב מִבְּמִרְכָּב: וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא אוֹתָם. אֵת כָּל הָאֲמֹר בְּעֵנִין הַזֶּבֶב: זֹכֵר, וְרָקוּ, וְשִׁכְבַת וְרָעוּ, וּמִימֵי רַגְלָיו, וְהַמִּשְׁכָּב, וְהַמִּרְכָּב, וְהַמּוֹשֵׁב, שֶׁיִּהְיֶה מִשְׁאֵן מִטָּמֵא אֲדָם לְטָמֵא בְּגָדִים:

6 וְהִישָׁב עַל הַכְּלִי. אֲפֹלוֹ לֹא נָגַע, אֲפֹלוֹ עֲשָׂרָה כְּלִים זֶה עַל זֶה, כָּלֵן מִטָּמְאִין מִשּׁוּם מוֹשֵׁב, וְכֵן בַּמִּשְׁכָּב: 8 וְכִי יֵרָק הַזֶּבֶב בַּטְּהוֹר. וְנָגַע בּוֹ אִו נִשְׁאֹו, שֶׁהָרָק מִטָּמֵא בַּמִּשְׁכָּב: 9 וְכִלְה־הַמִּרְכָּב. אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁלֹּא יֵשֵׁב עָלָיו, כִּגּוֹן: הַתַּפּוֹס שֶׁל סָרְגָא שְׁקוֹרִין אֲרָצוֹיָה, טָמֵא מִשּׁוּם מִרְכָּב. וְהָאֵפֶף שְׁקוֹרִין אֲלוֹיִ"שׁ, טָמֵא טָמֵא מִטָּמֵא מוֹשֵׁב:

8. שֶׁלֹּאֵפֶף. 9. מוֹשֵׁב־אֵפֶף.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

of an abnormally inflated carnal appetite, resulting in turn from overindulgence in lascivious behavior, speech, or thought. In the words of the sages, "Man possesses a small organ: [the more] he starves it, [the more] it is satisfied; [the more] he satisfies it, [the more] it hungers."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, a single, isolated instance of non-seminal emission only renders a man ritually impure to the same degree as does a seminal emission,⁶¹ since, as an isolated incident, it reflects no more than the fallen state of consciousness that we all inherit from the primordial snake.

However, when a man experiences two non-seminal emissions in succession (i.e., separated by less than a full intervening day), it indicates that he has purposely corrupted himself beyond "natural" (i.e., post-Tree-of-Knowledge) human objectification. In

such a case, his ritual defilement is more serious, and therefore a full week is required for him to be purged of it. When a man experiences three non-seminal emissions in succession, it indicates that he has become so entrenched in his corrupt perspective on life that it has become his normative consciousness, and therefore, his ritual impurity is so severe that it requires—in addition to a full week of purgation—a full sacrificial rite.

Nonetheless, together with its warning against reinforcing anti-Divine consciousness through transgressing God's will, the Torah informs us that the power of repentance is such that even someone who has internalized evil to the extent that it has displaced his natural consciousness altogether can still be rehabilitated.⁶²

61. Below, v. 32. 62. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 37, pp. 42-46.

6 Similarly, **anyone who touches or even sits on an object upon which the man with the discharge sat** without touching it, becomes ritually defiled. In addition, any garments that this person is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him also become ritually defiled. **He must therefore immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain ritually defiled until evening**, at which time he and his garments will become rid of this defilement.

In contrast, if the man with the discharge merely *touches* an object (even an object that is made for reclining or sitting), the touched object transmits defilement only to food and drink, not to people or implements.

Type of Contact with Object by Man with Discharge	Entity Defiled by Touching Object or by Sitting/Reclining on Object without Touching
reclines on object made for reclining or sits on object made for sitting	person, implements, food, drink; implements touching the touched person while he is being defiled
touches such objects	food, drink

Figure 3. Indirect Transmission of Ritual Defilement

7 Based on this, it goes without saying that **anyone who directly touches the flesh of the man with the discharge** becomes ritually defiled, and, in addition, any garments he is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him also become ritually defiled. **He must therefore immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain defiled until evening**, at which time he will become rid of this defilement.

8 **If the man with the discharge spits on an undefiled person**, and the saliva either touches the person himself or he carries it (not touching it directly), such a person becomes ritually defiled, as do any garments he is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him. **He must therefore immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain defiled until evening**, at which time he will become rid of this defilement.

9 With regard to **any part of a saddle other than the seat** (e.g., the pommel or the cantle), **if the man with the discharge rides—i.e., leans—upon it, it becomes defiled** thereby.

10 **Whoever touches any such part of the saddle that was ‘under’ the man with the discharge—i.e., that he leaned upon but did not sit upon—becomes ritually defiled**, but his garments do not become defiled. Thus, he is only required to immerse himself in a *mikveh* and wait **until evening** in order to become rid of this defilement; he does not have to immerse his garments.

The law regarding the saliva of the man with the discharge also applies to the discharge itself, the man’s vital seed, his urine, and objects on which he has reclined, sat, or ridden. **Whoever carries them** becomes ritually defiled, as do any garments this person is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him. **He must therefore immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain defiled until evening**, at which time he will become rid of this defilement.

— ONKELOS —

11 וכל די יקרב בה דובנא וידוהי לא שטף במי'א ויצבע לבשוהי ויסחי במי'א ויהי מסאב עד רמשא: 12 ומן דחסף די יקרב בה דובנא יתבר וכל מן דאע ישחטיה במי'א: 13 וארי ידכי דובנא מדובה וימני לה שבעא יומין לדכותה ויצבע לבשוהי ויסחי בסרה במי מבוע וידכי: 14 וביומא תמינא יסב לה תרין שפנינן או תרין בני יונה וייתי לקדם יי לתרע משכן זמנא ויתגנון לכהנא: 15 ויעבד יתהון כהנא חד חטאתא וחד עלתא ויכפר עלוהי כהנא קדם יי מדובה: 16 וגבר ארי תפוק מנה שכבת זרעא ויסחי במי'א ית כל בשרה ויהי מסאב עד רמשא: 17 וכל לבוש וכל משך די יהי עלוהי שכבת זרעא ויצטבע במי'א ויהי מסאב עד רמשא:

11 וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִגַּע בּוֹ הַזֵּב וְיָדָיו לֹא־שָׁטַף בַּמַּיִם וְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְרִחֵן בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 12 וְכָל־יְחִירָשׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִגַּע בּוֹ הַזֵּב יִשְׁבֵּר וְכָל־כְּלִי־עֵץ יִשָּׁטַף בַּמַּיִם: 13 וְכִי־יִטְהַר הַזֵּב מִזּוּבוֹ וְסָפַר לוֹ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לְטַהֲרָתוֹ וְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְרִחֵן בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם חַיִּים וְטָהַר: 14 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִקְחֶהֱלֹ שְׁתֵּי תָרִים אוֹ שְׁנֵי בָנֵי יוֹנָה וְכֹא | לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּנְתָנָם אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 15 וַעֲשֵׂה אֹתָם כַּכֹּהֵן אֶחָד חֲטָאת וְהָאֶחָד עֹלָה וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מִזּוּבוֹ: ׀

◆ ששי (שביעי במחוברין) 16 ואיש כִּי־תִצָּא מִמֶּנּוּ שִׁכְבַּת־זֶרַע וְרִחֵן בַּמַּיִם אֶת־כָּל־בְּשָׁרוֹ וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 17 וְכָל־בֶּגֶד וְכָל־עוֹר אֲשֶׁר־יְהִיהַ עָלָיו שִׁכְבַּת־זֶרַע וְכַבֵּס בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב:

— RASHI —

הידיים: 12 וכלי חרש אשר יגע בו הזב. יכול אפלו נגע בו מאחוריו וכו', כדאיתא בתורת כהנים, עד: אינהו מגעו שהוא בכלל הוי אומר: זה הסטו: 13 וכי יטהר. כשיפסק: שבעת ימים לטהרתו. שבעת ימים טהורים משמאת זיבה, שלא יראה זוב, וכלן רצופין:

11 וידיו לא שטף במים. בעוד שלא טבל משמאתו, ואפלו פסק מזובו וספר שבעה ומחטר טבילה, מטמא בכל טמאותיו. וזה שהוציא הכתוב טבילת גופו של זב בלשון שטיפת ידיים, ללמדך שאין בית הסתרים טעון ביאת מים, אלא אבר הגלוי כמו

offering, and thus the priest will effect atonement for him from his discharge, before God. He may then consume sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts.

Defilement Contracted via Seminal Discharges

- ◆ *Sixth Reading (Seventh when combined)* 16 A man from whom there issues a discharge of semen must immerse all his flesh in the water of a mikveh, after which he will remain defiled until evening, at which time he will become rid of this defilement. This applies equally to all discharges of semen, whether permitted (i.e., by which a man inseminates his wife through marital relations) or forbidden (all other types⁶⁷), and whether voluntary or involuntary.

17 Any garment or any leather article that has semen on it must be immersed in the water of a mikveh, after which it will remain defiled until evening, at which time it will become rid of this defilement.

67. Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 23.

11 Whomever the man with the discharge touches before the latter immerses himself in a *mikveh* becomes defiled, even if the man with the discharge had already counted seven consecutive days since the discharge ceased. (In order for immersion to be valid, it is only necessary that the parts of the body exposed when the person immersing stands upright and naked, like **his hands, be covered with water**, but not interior skin, such as that inside the nose or mouth.) In addition, any garments that the touched person is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him also become ritually defiled. The one who was touched under these circumstances **must** therefore **immerse** both **his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain defiled until evening**, at which time he will become rid of this defilement.

12 As was mentioned previously,⁶³ earthenware vessels only become ritually defiled when a source of defilement is present inside them, not through contact with their outer surface. This principle is true of the ritual defilement transmitted by a man with a discharge, as well, with the following exception: **An earthenware vessel that the man with the discharge moves**, either directly—by **touching** it—or indirectly, becomes ritually defiled. (If he merely touches it from the outside without moving it, however, it does not become defiled.) Like any other defiled earthenware vessel, it **must be shattered** in order to be rid of this defilement.

In contrast, **any other—e.g., wooden—vessel** that he touches becomes defiled only when he touches it, not when he moves it indirectly, but it becomes defiled even when he touches it from the outside. **It must be covered by water**, i.e., immersed in a *mikveh*, to become rid of its ritual defilement.

13 When the man with the discharge is rid of his discharge, i.e., the discharge has clearly ceased, **he must count for himself seven** consecutive **days** during which he remains **free** of the discharge. **He must then immerse his garments and immerse his flesh in spring water** or other flowing natural water, such as a flowing river. A *mikveh* of not-naturally-flowing water, such as a man-made pool, a lake, a pond, or the ocean, is not valid for the immersion of a man with this type of discharge.⁶⁴ After proper immersion, **he will become undefiled** in that he will no longer defile anyone or anything else, and he may consume *terumah*⁶⁵ if he is entitled to.

14 If he had only two discharges before his flow ceased, he may, after immersion, consume sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts. If, however, he had three or more discharges before his flow ceased, he may neither consume sacrificial meat nor enter the Tabernacle precincts after immersing himself until he performs the following rites:⁶⁶ **On the eighth day, he must take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and come before God, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and give them to the priest.**

15 The priest must sacrifice them, one as a sin-offering and the other as an ascent-

63. Above, 11:33. 64. *Mishneh Torah*, *Mikva'ot* 1:5. 65. Exodus 22:28; Numbers 18:12; Deuteronomy 18:14. 66. Rashi on v. 3, above.

ONKELOS 18
 18 וְאֵתְּתָא דִּי יִשְׁכּוּב גִּבְרָא יִתְּהּ שְׂכֵבֶת זֶרַע
 וְיִסְחֹן בְּמִיָּא וְיִזְוֹן מִסְאָבִין עַד רִמְשָׁא:

18 וְאֵשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אִישׁ אֶתְּהּ שְׂכֵבֶת זֶרַע
 וְרָחֲצוּ בַמַּיִם וְיִטְמְאוּ עַד־הָעֶרֶב: פ

RASHI 18 וְרָחֲצוּ בַמַּיִם. גִּזְרַת מֶלֶךְ הִיא שְׁתַּטְמָא הָאֵשָׁה
 בְּבִיָּאָה, וְאִין הֵטַעַם מִשּׁוּם נֹגַע בְּשִׁכְבַּת זֶרַע, שְׁהִירִי

strual period, she counts 11 days again for non-menstrual bleeding, and so on (see Figure 4).

If, however, during an 11-day non-menstrual span, she bleeds for three or more consecutive days, her next 7-day menstrual period is postponed until after she has ceased bleeding and then counted seven full, consecutive days clear of bleeding, as will be explained later. The day on which she next bleeds after these seven clear days is considered the first day of her next 7-day menstrual period, after which she again counts 11 days for non-menstrual bleeding, and so on (see Figure 5, next page).

If the woman bleeds on the last two days of the 11-day non-menstrual span and then continues to bleed on one or more of the subsequent days, these subsequent

A CLOSER LOOK

[18] They must immerse themselves: This immersion, like all those mentioned in this section of the Torah, is required in order to permit those who have become ritually defiled to consume sanctified food (*terumah* and sacrifices) or enter the Temple and its precincts. Nowadays, when we are all in any case ritually defiled (by direct or indirect contact with corpses, for which the means of purification⁷⁰ are not presently available), this law is not applicable, and therefore, neither men who have a seminal emission of any kind nor women who engage in marital relations are technically required to immerse themselves in a *mikveh*.

Nonetheless, Ezra the scribe—as part of the religious revival he headed when the Jewish people returned to the Land of Israel after the Babylonian exile—decreed that men who have a seminal emission should immerse themselves before studying the Torah, and this enactment was eventually extended to include praying, as well.⁷¹ The inconvenience of having to immerse themselves the following morning was intended to prevent the men from overindulging in mari-

tal relations, thereby enabling them to devote more time and energy to the study of the Torah. However, this decree never acquired the force of law, since it proved beyond the ability of the majority of the community to fulfill, and in fact proved counterproductive, preventing the men from studying the Torah when they otherwise would have or engaging in marital relations when they otherwise should have.⁷²

Nevertheless, pious individuals who were able to fulfill their obligations in both areas did observe Ezra's enactment and continue to do so to the present day.⁷³ The founders of the Chasidic movement, in particular, instructed their followers to adhere to this practice.

Furthermore, from very early on in the Chasidic movement, it became common practice for men to immerse themselves every morning before prayers, regardless of whether they had had a seminal emission, for reasons of spiritual purity and renewed innocence before approaching God in prayer and engaging in His service throughout the day.⁷⁴

70. Numbers 19, 5:2. 71. *Bava Kama* 82b; *Berachot* 20b-22a. 72. *Berachot* 22a; *Tosefot* on *Bava Kama* 82b, s.v. *Ata Ihui*; *Mishneh Torah*, *Keriat Shema* 4:8, *Tefilah* 4:4-6; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 88. 73. Maimonides, *Responsa* (ed. Lipsa) §104; *Igrot HaRambam* p. 178 ff; *Rabbeinu Yonah* on *Berachot* 22a; *Mishneh Berurah* on *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 88, §4. See, however, *Tohorat Mayim*, ch. 77. 74. *Tzava'at HaRivash* 15 (ed. Kehot); *Likutei Yekarim* 198; *Likutei Torah* 4:43b; see *Igrot Kodesh*, vol. 9, pp. 153, 159, 301; *ibid.*, vol. 11, pp. 154, 333; *ibid.*, vol. 14, p. 407; *ibid.*, vol. 18, p. 153; *ibid.*, vol. 20, p. 93; *Sefer HaMa'amaram* 5711 (ed. 5748), p. 19.

18 A woman with whom a man engages in carnal relations, whereby there was a discharge of semen, becomes defiled just as does the man. They must therefore both immerse themselves in the water of a mikveh, after which they will remain defiled until evening, at which time they will become rid of this defilement.

Defilement Contracted via Menstruation

19 Just as men contract ritual defilement from both normal and abnormal discharges from their reproductive organ (i.e., seminal and non-seminal discharges, respectively), women also contract ritual defilement from both normal and abnormal discharges from their reproductive organ (i.e., menstrual blood and non-menstrual blood, respectively). But whereas for men, normal and abnormal discharges are differentiated by the color and consistency of the discharge, for women, normal and abnormal discharges are distinguished solely by the date on which they occur, as follows.⁶⁸ Starting from the first time in her life that she begins menstruating, a woman begins a somewhat elastic cycle of alternating 7-day menstrual periods and 11-day non-menstrual time spans. Menstruation is considered to last exactly seven days, even if actual bleeding occurs for fewer or more days; during the 11-day spans, whatever uterine bleeding may occur is considered non-menstrual.⁶⁹ Although every 7-day menstrual period is followed immediately by an 11-day non-menstrual span, the 7-day menstrual period following an 11-day non-menstrual span does not begin until actual bleeding occurs. To illustrate: A woman's first 7-day menstrual period begins with the onset of her menarche. As soon as these seven days are over, she begins counting again; any bleeding that occurs during the ensuing 11 days is considered non-menstrual. If she does not bleed during these 11 days, or bleeds on no more than two of them consecutively, she begins her next 7-day menstrual period the next time she starts bleeding, no matter when this occurs. After this second 7-day men-

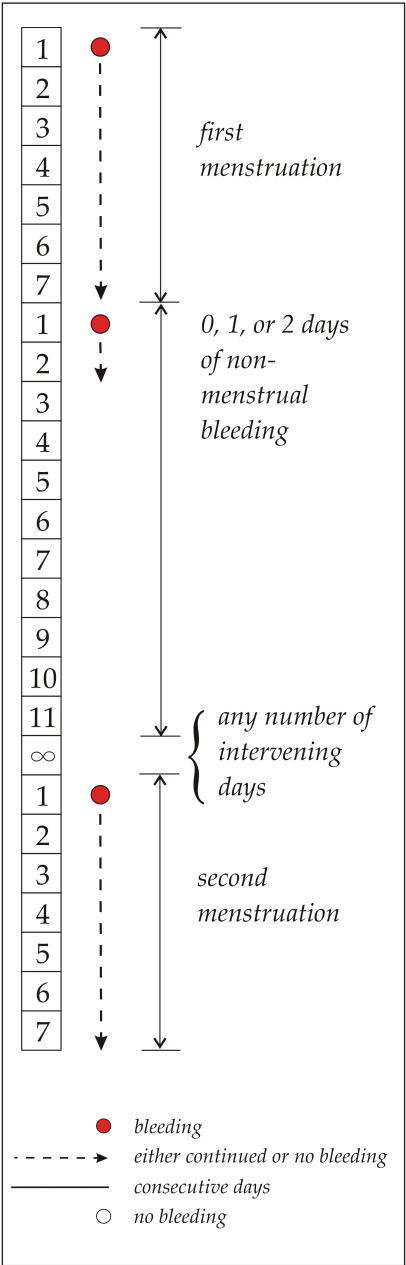


Figure 4. Menstrual Cycle with Less than Three Days of Non-Menstrual Bleeding

68. See Nachmanides, *Hilchot Nidah*; Shulchan Aruch HaRav, *Hilchot Nidah*, introduction. 69. *Nidah* 77b-73a.

— ONKELOS —
 19 וְאֵתְתָא אַרִי תְהִי דִּיבָא דָם יְהִי
 דוּבָהּ בְּבִשְׂרָהּ שְׁבַעַת יוֹמִין תְּהִי
 בְּרַחוּקָה וְכָל דִּיקְרָב בָּהּ יְהִי מְסָאָב עַד
 רְמָשָׂא:

19 וְאִשָּׁה בִּי־תִהְיֶה זָכָה דָם יִהְיֶה זָכָה בְּבִשְׂרָהּ
 שְׁבַעַת יָמִים תִּהְיֶה בְּנִדְתָּהּ וְכָל־הַנֶּגַע בָּהּ יִטְמָא עַד־
 הָעֶרֶב:

— RASHI —
 קרוי זוב לטמא, אלא אם כן הוא אדם: בְּנִדְתָּהּ. כמו:
 "ומתבבל ינדהו", שהיא מנדה ממגע כל אדם: תִּהְיֶה
 בְּנִדְתָּהּ. אפלו לא ראתה אלא ראיה ראשונה:
 19 בִּי תִהְיֶה זָכָה. יכול מאחד מכל אבריה, תלמוד
 לומר⁷⁵: "והוא גלתה את מקור דמיה", ואין דם מטמא
 אלא הבא מן המקור: דם יהיה זכא בְּבִשְׂרָהּ. אין זכא

¹⁰. ויקרא כ, יח. ¹¹. איוב יח, יח.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

19 Menstrual blood and non-menstrual blood: These two types of blood and the ritual defilement they impart parallel the two types of discharges men experience—seminal and non-seminal—and the ritual defilement they impart, as described above.⁷⁵ The laws of female bleeding, just like the laws of male emissions, take us back to the dawn of human history and remind us how much our lives are a product of the incident with the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil and the resultant expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and how we must continually strive to reverse the consequences of these events until reality is consummately spiritually healed, with the final, messianic Redemption.

Part of the "pain" that was introduced into the process of pregnancy on account of the incident with the Tree of Knowledge is the menstrual cycle. As was explained in our discussion of the primordial sin,⁷⁶ it is specifically the feminine side of our psyches—our drive to concretize Divine inspiration, thereby transforming the world into God's home—that is the most susceptible to the enticements of evil. In order to rectify this susceptibility, the woman—and through her, her husband, whose life is also affected by his wife's menstrual cycle—must be periodically reminded of their own fallibility as God's partners in creation. The potentially heady sense of self that can result from partaking in the miracle of bearing

— A CLOSER LOOK —

[19] Alternating 7-day menstrual periods and 11-day non-menstrual time spans: Inasmuch as—in this context—there is no empirical difference between menstrual and non-menstrual blood (the sole factor in determining whether blood is menstrual or non-menstrual being the day on which the bleeding occurs), it is quite easy to lose track of the count and mistake one type of blood for the other. Furthermore, as we shall see, the Torah forbids marital relations when the wife has been ritually defiled by either menstrual or non-menstrual bleeding, so the laws of this type of ritual defilement are just as pertinent when the Temple is not standing as when it is.

For this reason, in the second century, Rabbi Yehudah the Prince (the redactor of the Mishnah), in the wake of the upheavals accompanying the destruction of the Second Temple and the resultant diaspora of the Jewish people, decreed that whenever a woman bleeds for either one day or two consecutive days, she should count six clear days before immersing herself, and when-

ever she bleeds for three or more consecutive days, she should count seven clear days before immersing herself. This way, there is no need to keep track of the 7- and 11-day spans. If she bleeds for one or two days, she is technically permitted to engage in marital relations either after the second or third day after she bled (if it was one or two days of non-menstrual bleeding) or after the seventh day after she began to bleed (if it was one or two days of menstrual bleeding); thus, counting six clear days covers both possibilities. If, however, she bled for three or more days, three days of this bleeding might have been non-menstrual; she must therefore count seven clear days to cover that possibility.

However, the Jewish women of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince's time took upon themselves to count seven clear days after any duration of bleeding, even only one day, in order that there be only one rule for all cases. This additional stringency was approved of by the legal authorities of the time and became fixed as Jewish law to this day.⁷⁷

75. On v. 2. 76. On Genesis 2:17-18. 77. Nachmanides, *Hilchot Nidah*; Shulchan Aruch HaRav, *Hilchot Nidah*, introduction.

days of bleeding do not combine with the two days of non-menstrual bleeding to form a 3-or-more-day period of non-menstrual bleeding that must be followed by a 7-day count of clear days. Rather, this subsequent bleeding begins her second menstrual period (see Figure 6).

We will first discuss the ritual defilement that a woman contracts from menstrual bleeding.

If a woman has a uterine discharge, and her discharge,

based on the day it begins, is deemed to be **menstrual blood**, she becomes ritually defiled, as will be described presently. In order not to ritually defile other people or implements, she must refrain from touching them or letting them touch her. **She must remain in her state of separation** from contact for exactly **seven days**, regardless of how long her flow actually lasts. If her discharge has ceased by the end of the seventh day of her menstruation period, she may immerse herself the following evening and thus become rid of this defilement.

During her period of separation, **whoever touches her will become ritually defiled** and must immerse themselves in a *mikveh*, after which they will remain defiled **until evening**, at which time they will become rid of this defilement.

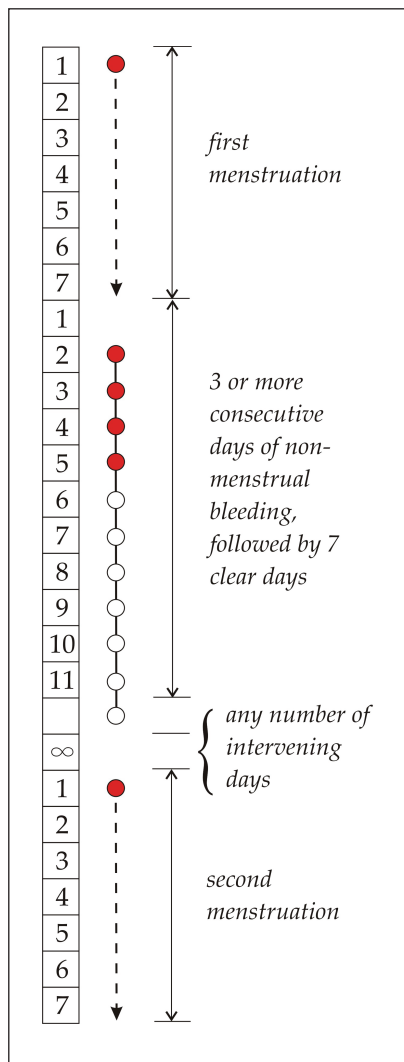


Figure 5. Menstrual Cycle with Three or More Days of Non-Menstrual Bleeding

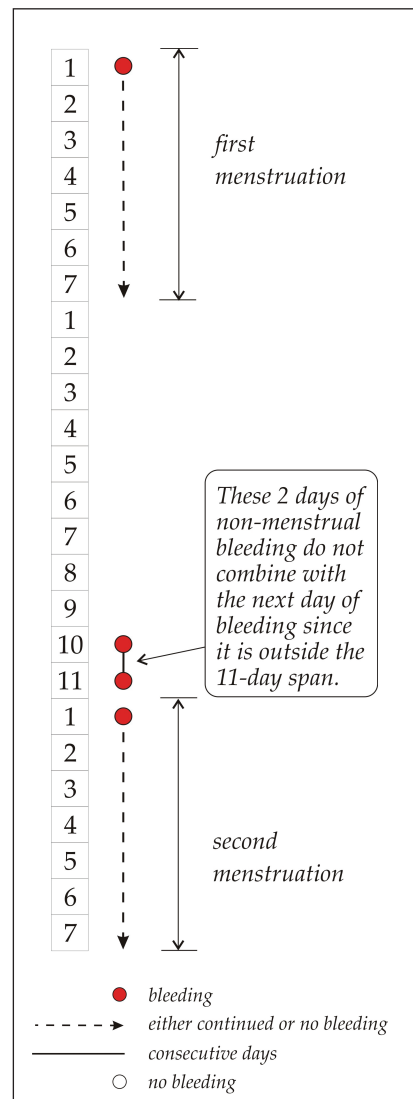


Figure 6. Non-Menstrual and Menstrual Bleeding do not Combine

— ONKELOS —

20 וְכָל אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁכַּב עָלָיו בְּנִדְתָּהּ יִטְמָא וְכָל אֲשֶׁר
תִּשְׁכַּב עָלָיו יִטְמָא: 21 וְכָל־הַנֶּנֶז בְּמִשְׁכַּבָּהּ יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו
וְרִחֵץ בַּמֵּיִם וְיִטְמָא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 22 וְכָל־הַנֶּנֶז בְּכָל־כְּלִי
אֲשֶׁר־תִּשְׁכַּב עָלָיו יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְרִחֵץ בַּמֵּיִם וְיִטְמָא עַד־
הָעֶרֶב: 23 וְאִם עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּב הוּא אֹו עַל־הַכְּלִי אֲשֶׁר־
הוּא יִשְׁכַּב־עָלָיו בְּנִגְעוֹ־בּוֹ יִטְמָא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 24 וְאִם
שָׁכַב יִשְׁכַּב אִישׁ אֹתָהּ וְתָהִי נִדְתָּהּ עָלָיו וְיִטְמָא שִׁבְעַת
יָמִים וְכָל־הַמִּשְׁכָּב אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁכַּב עָלָיו יִטְמָא: ס

— RASHI —

אין מגעו מטמא אדם לטמא בגדים: 24 וְתָהִי נִדְתָּהּ
עָלָיו. יכול יעלה לרגלה, שאם בא עליה בחמישי
לנדה, לא יטמא אלא שלשה ימים כמותה?
תלמוד לומר: "וְיִטְמָא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים". ומה תלמוד
לומר: "וְתָהִי נִדְתָּהּ עָלָיו"? מה היא מטמאה אדם
וכלי חרס, אף הוא מטמא אדם וכלי חרס:

23 וְאִם עַל הַמִּשְׁכָּב הוּא. השוכב או היושב על
משכבה או על מושבה, אפלו לא נגע בה, אף הוא
בדת טמאה האמורה במקרא העליון, שטעון כבוס
בגדים: על הכלי. לרבות את המרפב: בנגעו בו יטמא.
אינו מדבר אלא על המרפב, שנתרבה מ"על הכלי":
בנגעו בו יטמא. ואינו טעון כבוס בגדים, שהמרפב

ritual defilement caused by **her menstruation will be transmitted to him and he will be defiled for seven days**, counting from the day on which they conducted relations, regardless of on which day of her seven-day count they occurred. He will become defiled exactly in the same way she is defiled: **Any object intended for reclining upon, upon which he reclines will thereby become defiled**, and so forth, as just stated.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

a new human being (which serves as the archetype for propagating Divine consciousness throughout creation in general) must be attenuated by being reminded of human limitations. Thus, by means of the menstrual cycle, wife and husband are humbled into acknowledging the need to submit to God's will when fulfilling His mission on earth.

We also noted⁷⁹ that the sin of Adam and Eve was presaged by the diminution of the moon, which resulted in its monthly cycle of waxing and waning. The fact that the woman's menstrual cycle occurs in specifically monthly periods alludes to its origin in the lunar cycle.

Normal menstrual bleeding renders the woman ritually defiled to a limited extent, as we will see. The extent of this form of ritual defilement and its accompanying purification process is typically enough to restore the couple to their normal Divine consciousness (until it is necessary to repeat the cycle the following month). This periodic cleansing

of the existential "venom" of the primordial snake that was injected into our psyches when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit will continue until God "causes the spirit of impurity to pass away from the earth."⁸⁰

Non-menstrual bleeding, in contrast, is the result of an abnormally inflated feminine ego, in which the self-assurance that should have been humbled by the menstrual cycle is instead fed by presumptuously and repeatedly overstepping the bounds of God's will. This sinful hubris elicits uterine bleeding—the reminder of human frailty—before its scheduled resumption, resulting in a more serious extent of ritual defilement necessitating a full week of purgation followed by sacrificial rites.

Here again, together with its warning against reinforcing anti-Divine consciousness through transgressing God's will, the Torah informs us that power of repentance is such that even someone who has internalized evil to this extent can still be rehabilitated.⁸¹

78. Below, 20:18. 79. On Genesis 1:16. 80. Par. Zachariah 13:2. 81. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 26-28.

20 **Any object** intended for reclining upon, **upon which she reclines during her period of menstrual separation will** thereby **become ritually defiled; and any object** intended for sitting upon, **upon which she sits will** thereby **become defiled.**

21 As is the case with a man with a non-seminal discharge, an object upon which a menstruant has reclined or sat transmits ritual defilement even to people and implements, as follows:

Anyone who touches an object that she reclined upon becomes ritually defiled. In addition, any garments that this person is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him also become ritually defiled. **He must** therefore **immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain defiled until evening**, at which time he will become rid of this defilement.

22 Similarly, **anyone who touches an object upon which she sat** becomes ritually defiled. In addition, any garments that this person is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him also become ritually defiled. **He must** therefore **immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water** of a *mikveh*, after which **he will remain ritually defiled until evening**, at which time he and his garments will become rid of this defilement.

23 Even **if he** reclines or sits indirectly **on an object that she reclined upon or sat upon**, he still becomes ritually defiled to the same degree as if he had touched that object.

Similar to a man with a non-seminal discharge, if she spits on someone and her saliva either touches the person himself or he carries it without touching it, he and any garments he is wearing at the time become ritually impure and must be immersed in a *mikveh*, after which they remain defiled until the evening, at which time they become rid of this defilement.

Furthermore, if someone carries her saliva, menstrual blood, urine, or objects upon which she reclined, sat, or rode, both he and any garments he is wearing at the time become ritually impure and must be immersed in a *mikveh*, after which they remain defiled until the evening, at which time they become rid of this defilement.

Also, with regard to any part of a saddle other than the seat (e.g., the pommel or the cantle), if she leans on it without sitting on it and then someone **touches it**, only **he** himself **becomes** ritually **defiled**, not his garments. Thus, he is only required to immerse himself in a *mikveh* and wait **until evening** in order to become rid of this defilement; he does not have to immerse his garments.

In contrast, if she merely *touches* an object (even an object made for reclining or sitting), the touched object transmits defilement only to food and drink, not to people or implements.

In addition, however, the stringency regarding earthenware vessels that applies to a man with a non-seminal discharge also applies to a menstruant: If she moves such a vessel, even indirectly, it becomes ritually defiled.

24 You will be taught later that it is forbidden to engage in carnal relations with a menstruant.⁷⁸ **If a man** nonetheless **does engage in carnal relations with her**, the

— ONKELOS —

25 וְאֵתָא אַרִי יְדוּב דּוּב דְּמָה יוֹמִין סִינְאִין בְּלֹא עֵדֵן רְחוּקָה אִו אַרִי תְדוּב עַל רְחוּקָה כָּל יוֹמִי דּוּב סְאוּבְתָה בְּיוֹמֵי רְחוּקָה תְּהִי מְסַבָּב הִיא: 26 כָּל מְשַׁבֵּב דִּי תִשְׁכּוּב עֲלוּהִי כָּל יוֹמֵי דוּבָה כְּמִשְׁכָּב רְחוּקָה יְהִי לָהּ וְכָל מְנָא דִּי תִיתֵב עֲלוּהִי מְסַבָּב יְהִי כְּסְאוּבָת רְחוּקָה: 27 וְכָל דִּיקְרָב בְּהוֹן יְהִי מְסַבָּב וַיִּצְבַּע לְבוּשׁוֹהִי וַיִּסְחִי בְּמִיא וַיְהִי מְסַבָּב עַד רַמְשָׁא: 28 וְאִם דְּכִיאָת מְדוּבָה וְתִמְנִי לָהּ שְׂבָעָא יוֹמִין וּבְתֵרָא בֵּן תְּדַבֵּי: 29 וּבְיוֹמָא תְּמִינָאָה תִּסְבֵּ לָהּ תְּרִין שְׁפִינִין אִו תְּרִין בְּנֵי יוֹנָה וְתִיתִי יְתֵהוֹן לֹת בְּהִנָּא לְתִרַע מִשְׁכָּן זִמְנָא: 30 וַיַּעֲבֵד בְּהִנָּא יֵת חַד חֲטָאָתָא וַיֵּת חַד עֲלָתָא וַיִּכְפֹּר עֲלֵהּ בְּהִנָּא קֳדָם יְיָ מִדּוּב סְאוּבְתָה: 31 וְתִפְרִשׁוּן יֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִסּוּאֲבָתְהוֹן וְלֹא יִמּוּתוּן בְּסוּאֲבָתְהוֹן בְּסַבְּבִיהוֹן יֵת מִשְׁכָּנֵי דִּי בִּנְיָהוֹן:

25 וְאִשָּׁה בִּי־יִזְוֹב זֹוֹב דְּמָה יָמִים רַבִּים בְּלֹא עֵת־נִדְתָּהּ אִו בִּי־תִזְוֹב עַל־נִדְתָּהּ כָּל־יָמֵי זֹוֹב טַמְאָתָהּ בִּימֵי נִדְתָּהּ תִּהְיֶה טַמְאָה הוּא: 26 כָּל־הַמְשַׁבֵּב אֲשֶׁר־תִּשְׁכַּב עָלָיו כָּל־יָמֵי זֹוֹבָה כְּמִשְׁכָּב נִדְתָּהּ יִהְיֶה־לָּהּ וְכָל־הַפְּלִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשָּׁב עָלָיו טַמָּא יִהְיֶה כְּטַמְאָת נִדְתָּהּ: 27 וְכָל־הַנּוֹגֵעַ בָּם יִטַּמָּא וְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטַמָּא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: 28 וְאִם־טִהְרָה מְזוּבָּה וְסִפְרָה לָּהּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְאַחֵר תִּתְהַר:

◆ שְׁבִיעִי 29 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי תִקַּח־לָהּ שְׁתֵּי תָרִים אִו שְׁנֵי בָנֵי יוֹנָה וְהִבִּיאָה אוֹתָם אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: 30 וְעָשָׂה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הָאֶחָד חַטָּאת וְאֶת־הָאֶחָד עֹלָה וְכָפַר עָלֶיהָ הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מְזוּב מִטַּמְאָתָהּ:

◆ מַפְטִיר 31 וְהִזְרַתָּם אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִטַּמְאָתָם וְלֹא יָמָתוּ בְּטַמְאָתָם כְּטַמְאָם אֶת־מִשְׁכָּנֵי אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכָם:

— RASHI —

רְבוּתִינוּ בְּפִרְשָׁה זֹו: אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר יוֹם יֵשׁ בֵּין סוּף נִדָּה לְתַחֲלַת נִדָּה, שְׁכָל שְׁלֹשֶׁת רְצוּפִין שֶׁתִּרְאָה בְּאֶחָד עֶשֶׂר יוֹם הַלָּלוּ, תִּהְיֶה זָכָה: 31 וְהִזְרַתָּם. אֵין "נִזְיָרָה" אֶלָּא פְּרִישָׁה, וְכָיִי: "נִזְרוּ אַחֲרָי", וְכָיִי: "נִזְיָר אַחֲרָי": וְלֹא יָמָתוּ בְּטַמְאָתָם. הִרִי הַכֹּהֵן שֶׁל מְטַמָּא מְקֻדָּשׁ קְרוִי "מִיתָה":

25 יָמִים רַבִּים. שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים: בְּלֹא עֵת נִדְתָּהּ. אֶחָד שִׁנְיָאָו שִׁבְעַת יָמֵי נִדְתָּהּ: אִו כִּי תִזְוֹב. אֵת שְׁלֹשֶׁת הַיָּמִים הַלָּלוּ: עַל נִדְתָּהּ. מִפְּלֶג מִנִּדְתָּהּ יוֹם אֶחָד, זֹו הִיא זָכָה, וּמִשְׁפָּטָה חָרוֹץ בְּפִרְשָׁה זֹו. וְלֹא בְּדַת הַנִּדָּה, שְׁזוּ טַעוּנָה סְפִירַת שְׂבָעָה נְקִיִּים וְקָרְבָן, וְהַנִּדָּה אֵינָה טַעוּנָה סְפִירַת שְׂבָעָה נְקִיִּים, אֶלָּא "שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תִּהְיֶה בְּנִדְתָּהּ" בֵּין רוּאָה בֵּין שְׂאִינָה רוּאָה. וְדָרְשׁוּ

12. תורת כהנים 13. ישעיה א, ד. 14. בראשית מט, כו.

30 The priest must sacrifice them, one as a sin-offering and the other as an ascent-offering, and thus the priest will effect atonement for her, before God, from the defilement of her discharge. She may then consume sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts.'

Conclusion; Defilement Contracted by Men via Minor Abnormal Discharges

- ◆ *Maftir* 31 Tell the court: 'You must thus separate the Israelites from their defilement, so that they not die on account of their defilement as part of the punishment of excision for defiling My Sanctuary, which is in their midst, by entering it while ritually defiled.'

Defilement Contracted by Women via Abnormal Discharges

25 We will now discuss the ritual defilement that a woman contracts from non-menstrual bleeding.

If a woman bleeds for only one day or two consecutive days during her 11-day non-menstrual span, and then passes one full day clear of bleeding, she may immerse herself in a *mikveh* on that clear day, after which she becomes rid of this defilement. On the evening following her immersion, she is permitted to eat all consecrated food to which she is entitled, including sacrificial meat, and to enter the Tabernacle precincts.

If, however, her bleeding continues for three or more consecutive days, the law is different:

A woman whose discharge of uterine blood flows for more than two days, i.e., a minimum of three days, and these three or more days occur outside of but immediately following the 7-day span of her menstrual separation; or she has a discharge of blood for three or more days after the 7-day span of her menstrual separation but removed from it by between one and ten intervening days, then, in either such case, she will be ritually defiled all the days of her defiling discharge, in the same manner that she is ritually defiled during the days of her menstrual separation.

26 Thus, **any object intended for reclining upon, upon which she reclines throughout the duration of her discharge will be treated**—with regard to becoming defiled and defiling other entities—**the same way as an object intended for reclining upon is treated during her period of menstrual separation.** Similarly, **any object intended for sitting upon, upon which she sits will thereby become defiled in the same way** such an object becomes defiled during her period of menstrual defilement.

27 **Anyone who touches such objects will become ritually defiled.** In addition, any garments that this person is touching or otherwise wearing while this ritual impurity is being transmitted to him also become ritually defiled. **He must therefore immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water of a mikveh,** after which **he will remain defiled until evening,** at which time he will become rid of this defilement.

28 **If she becomes rid of her discharge, i.e., the discharge clearly ceases, she must count for herself seven consecutive days** during which she remains free of any discharge. **After this, she may immerse herself in a mikveh on the seventh day⁸² and thus become undefiled** in that she will no longer defile anyone or anything else, and she may consume *terumah*⁸³ if she is entitled to, but she may still not consume sacrificial meat or enter the Tabernacle precincts.

- ◆ **Seventh Reading 29 On the eighth day, she must take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest after coming with them to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.**

82. *Nidah* 67b; Rashi *ad loc.*, s.v. *Lidei Safek*. 83. Exodus 22:28; Numbers 18:12; Deuteronomy 18:14.

ONKELOS

32 דא אורייתא דדוקנא ודי תפוק
מנה שכבת זרעא לאסתאבא בה;
33 ולדסאובתא ברזוקה ולדדאיב
ית דובה לדבר ולנוקא ולגבר די
ישכוב עם מסאבא:

32 זאת תורת הזב ואשר תצא ממנו שכבת זרע
לטהרה בה: 33 והדיוח בנדתה והזב את זובו לזכר
ולנקבה ולאיש אשר ישכב עם טמאה:

צ' פסוקים. עיר"ו סימן.

RASHI

ובעל שלש ראיות, שתורתן מפרשת למעלה:
חסלת פרשת מצורע

32 זאת תורת הזב. בעל ראיה אחת. ומהו תורתו?
ואשר תצא ממנו שכבת זרע. הרי הוא כבעל קרי,
טמא טמאת ערב: 33 והזב את זובו. בעל שתי ראיות

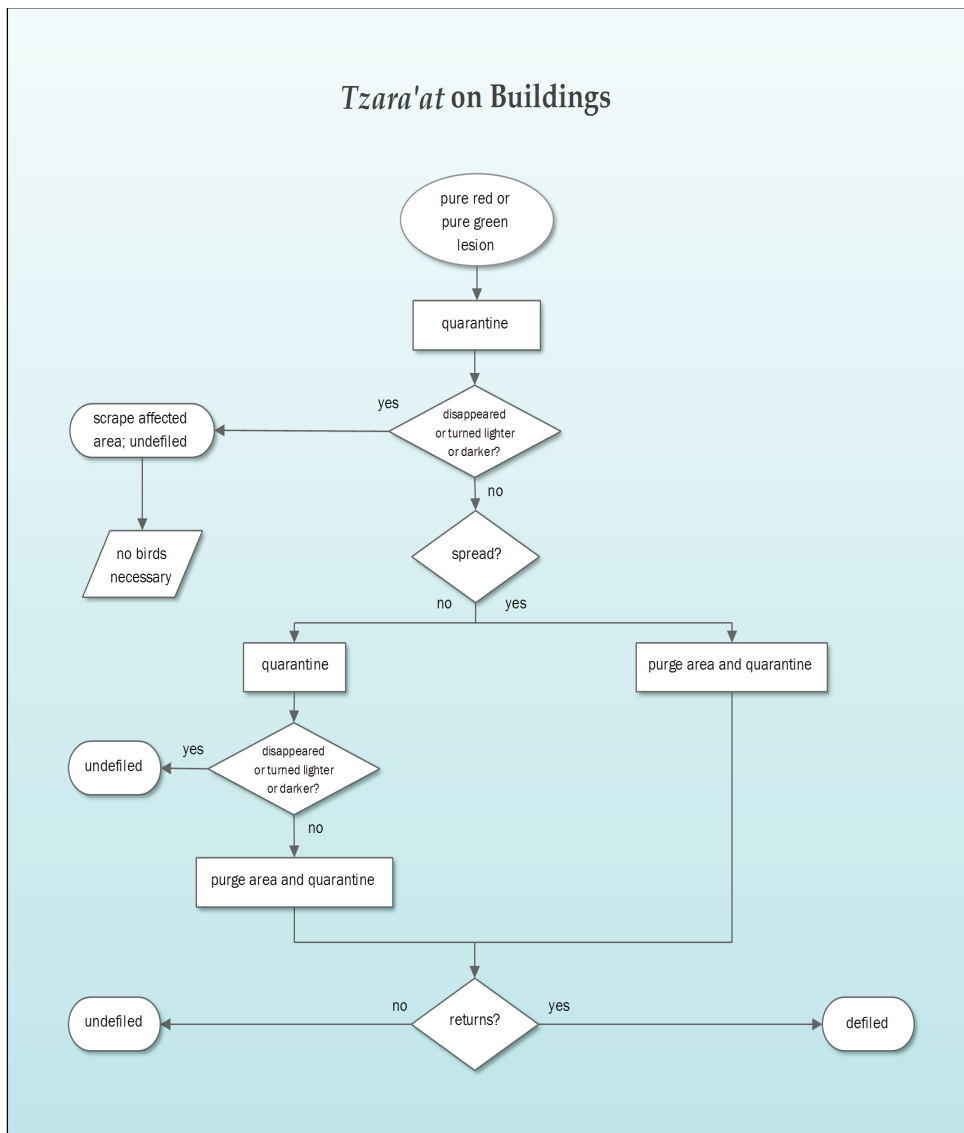


Figure 1. Tzara'at on Buildings

32 The following is a summary of **the law pertaining to a man who has an abnormal discharge**; this type of ritual defilement includes several cases, which we will now list in order of increasing severity.

The first is that of a man who has a single abnormal discharge. The defilement contracted by a man who has a single abnormal **discharge** is the same as that of **a man who has a seminal emission**.⁸⁴ This single discharge causes him to **become defiled** only for the rest of that day, during which he may immerse himself in a *mikveh*, after which he remains defiled until evening, at which time he becomes totally rid of this defilement. (The laws pertaining to a man who has two or more abnormal discharges were given above.⁸⁵

Number of Discharges	Time of Immersion	Requires Sacrifices in order to Enter Tabernacle or Eat Sacrificial Meat
one	on the same day that the flow ceases	no
two	after seven clear days	no
three or more	after seven clear days	yes

Figure 7. Degrees of Defilement for a Man with a non-Seminal Discharge

33 The other cases of ritual defilement contracted from bodily discharges are, in order of increasing severity: **a menstruating woman; someone who has an abnormal discharge followed by a second or third abnormal discharge, whether male or female; and a man who engages in carnal relations with a defiled woman**, all of whose laws were given above.⁸⁶

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Metzora* (which is also read when *Tazria* and *Metzora* are combined) is on p. 246.

If it is *Rosh Chodesh Iyar*, the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *Rosh Chodesh* (p. 266) are read instead of the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *parashat Metzora*.



84. Above, vv. 16-18. 85. Vv. 2-15. 86. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 81-88.

Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

