



תזריע  
מצרע

תזריע-מצרע

Tazria  
Metzora

Ashreinu | אשרינו

ENHANCING YOUR STUDY OF THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

## THE REWARD OF SACRIFICE

RABBI DANNY KROLL

RABBI DANNY KROLL

ELI LITWIN ('18)

SARA MERKIN ('17)

TAMARA KAHN ('17)

YITZY LANNER ('19)

**I**n the second of this week's two parshiot, the Torah speaks about the form of tzara'at which can afflict the home. Rashi notes that the formulation of the Torah's com-

mand about tzara'at of the home is peculiar.

כי תבאו אל ארץ כנען אשר אני נתן לכם לאחזה  
ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ אחזתכם

*"When you come to the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the disease of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession"*  
(Vayikra 14:34)

The Torah seems to take it as a given that homes in Israel would become afflicted with tzara'at, which presumably would only come as the result of a punishment.

What about free will? Why is it a forgone conclusion that individuals will be deserving of having their homes afflicted with this divine disease? Rashi explains that tzara'at of the home is not a punishment, but a reward. Upon hearing that Bnei Yisrael were on their way to conquer their land, the natives hid their riches inside the walls of their homes. The house afflicted with tzara'at would appear to be a punishment as the homeowner would be forced to take down the walls of their home, but beneath the bricks they would find the hidden riches.

Reflecting on Rashi's remarks, Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein, the author of the Aruch Hashulchan, writes that the lesson of tzara'at of the home is that suffering happens for a reason. Suffering is meant to strengthen us so that we are prepared to receive the abundance of riches God wishes to heap upon us. Tzara'at of the home

teaches us that things that are worthwhile and substantial in our lives must come through hard work.

This week we will celebrate the 69th birthday of the State of Israel as we celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. Before we celebrate the first flowering of the redemption of our people we observe Yom Hazikaron as we remember the soldiers who have fallen in battle defending the State of Israel along with victims of terror. The juxtaposition of Yom Hazikaron to Yom Ha'atzmaut reiterates that sometimes, in order to get something great, we must sacrifice as a people and sometimes pay the ultimate price. The State of Israel was created because people like Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kalisher said that a homeland in the Land of Israel would not just drop from the sky, but would only come about through hard work and sacrifice.

May we always remember those whose sacrifice allows us to have our homeland of Israel and may we continue to reap the rewards that come about through hard work.

## HIDDEN TREASURE

ELI LITWIN ('18)

IN PARSHAT METZORA, HASHEM FORESHADOWS FOR B'nei Yisrael that when they enter the land of Israel, it may come to pass that a person's home may be afflicted with tzara'at. When that occurs, the owner of the home is to come to the kohen and declare, "Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house" (Vayikra 14:34-35).

Why is it that the owner of the afflicted home says, "Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house" rather than, "An affliction has appeared to me in the house"?

Rashi explains that throughout Bnei Yisrael's 40 years of wandering in the desert, the Canaanites hid treasure within the brick and mortar walls of their houses. The tzara'at would cause the necessary demolition of the home, thereby exposing the hidden treasure inside. Thus, what appeared to be a punishment was actually a blessing in disguise. Now we can better

understand the far-reaching implication AND application of the homeowner's tentative statement. Situations occur in life that on the surface may seem unpleasant, distressful, or unfortunate. Often times we realize at a later point that what we had assumed was negative was actually positive and beneficial.

If we truly believe that Hashem has a reason for everything and that He always has our best interests at heart, we should avoid making rash judgements and definitive statements.

If we take moment to "turn over a rock" and look beneath the surface – we might find purpose, meaning, and a hidden treasure.

## SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL PURITY

SARA MERKIN ('17)

IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA WE LEARN ABOUT TZARA'AT, its symptoms, and consequences. The Torah tells us that it is identified by a kohen and can be found on the skin, homes, or clothing of a person who has spoken lashon hara. The person is then isolated from the community for a week, and upon their return they give a guilt and sin offering of two male lambs and one female. We are then taught the laws of nidah, which also require guilt and sin offerings of two doves. Why is it that these two violations and their consequences are taught together?

Lashon hara is a spiritual violation while nidah is physical. Lashon hara is a mindset -- you think bad thoughts about a person so you share them with others. Rav Hirsch explains that since tzara'at is examined by a kohen and not a doctor it has to be a spiritual punishment, and that is also implied by its miraculous nature.

Furthermore, the Ramban says that tzara'at means that there is a diminution of godliness in the world, which is why the tzara'at would show up on houses since God was withdrawing from the sinners homes. Nidah, on the other hand, is a physical action that

involves natural bodily occurrences and the inability to control sexual and animalistic desires.

The two violations are placed together to remind us of the spiritual and physical purity we need to maintain. It's not enough to just have one or the other -- both are necessary to serve God. We read these parshiot during the Sefirat Haomer period, as we approach Matan Torah, to emphasize the importance of achieving a sense of spiritual and physical purity.

In a time when we cannot give korbanot as guilt and sin offerings of forgiveness, we have to try our best to follow the laws of nidah and not speak lashon hara now as we prepare to celebrate the acceptance of the Torah.

## THE 'SACRIFICE' OF MILAH

TAMARA KAHN ('17)

AT THE BEGINNING OF PARSHAT TAZRIA, IN THE THIRD PASUK OF THE parsha, the Torah mentions the mitzvah of performing a brit mila on a baby boy when he reaches eight days of age.

Originally, Hashem introduced this mitzvah in Parshat Lech-Lecha when he commanded Avraham to give himself a brit mila and to give "every male among you a brit mila" (Vayikra 17:10). The commentary regarding the discussion of brit mila in Parshat Lech-Lecha includes the concept of brit mila providing mankind with the ability to strive for the pure, spiritual state of Adam HaRishon that preceded his sin. Initially, the mention of brit mila contained in the introduction of this week's parsha seems random in conjunction with the details of impurity, sinning, and Tzara'at, which comprise the overarching themes of the double-parsha.

However, the information provided in the commentaries regarding the mention of brit mila in Parshat Lech-Lecha helps further our understanding of its placement in this week's parsha with its correlation to atoning for man's original sin.

Brit mila in Parshat Tazria is mentioned in the context of a woman's impurity after childbirth, and once she becomes pure, she is required to bring two sacrifices, a Korban Olah and a Korban Chatat. Rabbeinu Bachye offers an explanation for these two korbanot that also relates to man's first transgression.

Man's sin and subsequent loss of purity and spirituality occurred due to Chava's sin; if Chava had refrained from eating the forbidden fruit and had not convinced Adam to try it as well, man would not have sinned and his soul would have remained untarnished. Therefore, a woman brings a Korban Olah to atone for improper thoughts and a Korban Chatat for practical sins, which both contain roots in Chava's sin.

To relate this concept back to brit mila, the childbearing woman atones for Chava's sin, but Adam still decided to sin as well, and the brit mila serves as atonement for Adam's sins on account of the male child.

Additionally, the Or HaChaim delineates the proper time to perform a brit mila: A brit mila must occur during the day and not at night, and this relates to the idea that sacrifices were only brought during the day and not at night. So the beginning of this parsha teaches us the different "sacrifices" of both mother and son that atone for the sins of the original man and woman in the world.

Another supporting explanation of the brit mila serving as a sacrifice is that we wait eight days before performing the brit mila in order that the baby should experience at least one Shabbat in his life in order to gain the spirituality that accompanies Shabbat and prepare to contribute as a "sacrifice" to Hashem. It is interesting to note that animals cannot be brought as korbanot until they are eight days old, drawing upon the sacrificial element of the brit mila that can only occur on the eighth day.



# THE GIFT OF SPEECH

YITZY LANNER ('19)

THIS WEEK'S DOUBLE PARSHA, TAZRIA-METZORA, MAINLY FOCUSES ON AND DISCUSSES THE PUNISHMENT for speaking lashon hara. The punishment given to one who speaks lashon hara is something called tzara'at. Tzara'at appears as white boils on one's body after they speak lashon hara.

What's interesting is that Hashem decides to dedicate a lot of time, almost two full parshiot, to discussing the laws regarding tzara'at. Even more interesting is that the gemara in Arachin (15b) compares lashon hara to the three cardinal sins: idolatry, adultery, and murder. What?! How can lashon hara be compared to any of these sins, let alone all three?

What makes humans superior to all other creations? The answer is that we have the ability to communicate with one another. No living beings other than humans have the ability to intelligently communicate amongst themselves like we do.

In light of that, the reason why speaking lashon hara is such a big problem becomes quite apparent. The biggest difference between us as humans and animals is our ability to communicate. So, if we use the biggest gift we've been given in a negative way, like by speaking lashon hara, we deserve major repercussions like tzara'at.

A lesson to be learned from this is to never take advantage of gifts that we are provided with. We must always make sure to use our gifts and special talents the right way and not to ignore them or misuse them.



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