



לעילוי נשמת

David ben ImaShalom

Sha'arei Eliyahu

Table Talk

פרשת תזריע-מצורע

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Mincha	7:00 PM
Candle Lighting	7:31 PM
Shacharit	8:30 AM
Shabbat Derasha	5:45 PM
Mincha	7:00 PM
SUNSET	7:49 PM
Aravit (Shabbat Ends)	8:35 PM
Rabbenu Tam	9:02 PM

Tzara'at

In this week's parasha it says: "...אדם כִּי־יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאת אֹי־סַפְּחַת אוֹ בַהֲרַת...". *If a man has a se'ith, a sappachath, or a bahereth on the skin of his flesh...*" (Vayikra 13:2). The Midrash says that when the Jewish People heard about leprosy they got scared. When Moshe heard that they were scared he said not to worry as these words were for Goyim, and that they were to go eat, drink and rejoice. In the Sefer HaKadosh Tzemach David asks a question: What does eating and drinking have to do with leprosy? It's one thing if we rejoice when we hear that the words on leprosy has to do with Goyim. But why does Moshe

SHORT & SWEET

There are four stages of leprosy: 1)Se'et 2)Sapachat 3)Baheret 4)Tzara'at. Each stage of leprosy is corresponding to the four exiles that the Jewish nation went through since the Exodus. These exiles are Bavel, Yavan (Greek), Paras-U'Madai (Persian Media), and lastly Edom (Esau's Descendants). Just like after the stage of Tzara'at goes away a person becomes Tahor and healed so to when we are redeemed from the Exile of Esau with the coming of the Moshiach we will all be healed and considered Tahor
~ R' Yosef Akilov

continue and say that the Jews had to eat and drink? When the Jewish people were leaving Egypt Hashem gave them a good sign that the leprosy on the houses of the Emorim would be a good for the Jewish people. Because when they heard that the Jewish people were coming to the Land of Israel, they hid all their jewelry inside the walls so the Jews don't find it. So when the walls had leprosy on them once the Jews entered the land they found the jewels and it was a cause to rejoice.

That explains the reason to rejoice but what about eating and drinking? The Rambam says really what happened was that when a person starts speaking Lashon Hara first Hashem send leprosy to the house then to his clothing and only then to the person himself. So when the Jewish people heard that the leprosy on the houses was the first sign they got worried and when Moshe saw this fear. He said don't worry when you see this sign of leprosy on your walls once you enter it's for the Goyim, but for you it will be jewels so that you will be able to buy provisions for your family to eat and drink.

What do we learn from this? Sometimes we hear bad news from around the world or close to home and get worried. But we must remember that we are Hashem's children and that He doesn't want us any harm. He is sending all these events of "leprosy" to the world but for us it is to our benefit so we should never drop our happiness.

Our Pasuk continues "...וְהָיָה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ לִנְגַע צָרַעַת" - *...and it forms a lesion of Tzara'at on the skin of his flesh*". It's interesting to note that the Pasuk continues with the word וְהָיָה which Chazal tells us is an auspicious term. How can Tzara'at be a happy thing? The Alshich explains that in Mesechet Erchin 16a it says that Tzara'at comes on a person so that he can do Teshuva. And that in Yoma 86b it says that when a person does Teshuva from Love all his sins become Mitzvot.

Once a person does Teshuva from Love his נגע turns into ענג. Because he seems his afflictions turn to his enjoyment (Mitzvot). This shows that sometimes when we have what seems like something bad happen in our lives in reality it is to our benefit and really a small step to an auspicious time to come.

~ R' Yosef Akilov

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorach

1. Which sins are punishable with the ugly tzara'at (skin discoloration)?
2. Which sin is equal to all sins?
3. If all the Jews were healed at Har Sinai, who were the metzoraim that the Kohanim had to heal?
4. Why is a woman tamei for 7 days when she gives birth to a boy, whereas she is tamei for 14 days when she gives birth to a girl?

1. The main sins that would cause tzara'at are: 1)Idolatry; 2) immorality; 3) murder; 4) Chillul Hashem; 5) cursing Hashem; 6) stealing from the public; 7) theft; 8) haughtiness; 9) lashon hara; 10) ayin ra'ah; and 11) miserliness. {Vayikra Rabbah 17:3, Bamidbar Rabbah 7:5, Erchin 16} 2. Bitul Torah and lashon hara are two sins that are as bad as all the other sins combined! {Yerusalmi Peah 1} 3. There were cynics who even spoke harshly about Moshe Rabbeinu. Some reshayim commented, "he belongs to a family of metzoraim [Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam all had tzara'at (for a short time)]." Those speakers of evil were therefore punished and they became metzoraim themselves. {Midrash} 4. Although both parents must do their best to raise their children, a man is more responsible to raise his sons, and a woman is more responsible to raise her daughters. Therefore a mother's purifying period after childbirth is longer for a girl than a boy. {Kav Samson Rafkael Hirsh zt"l}

Mourning Customs During the Omer Counting Period

It is customary among the entire Jewish nation not to hold weddings during the days of the counting of the Omer, from Pesach until the 34th day of the Omer.

There is a source quoted for the custom of abstaining from getting married during this period in the Responsa of the Geonim (who were the Jewish Sages who lived before the period of the Rishonim), for this is a custom of mourning, as our Sages tell us (Yevamot 62b) that Rabbi Akiva had twelve-thousands pairs of students who all died between the holidays of Pesach and Shavuot because they did not treat each other respectfully. They all died from an illness called "Askara" (an agonizing illness which causes acute respiratory distress and stoppage of breathing).

The reason why we customarily abstain from these things until the 34th of the Omer is based on the words of the Sefer HaManhig (page 72b, authored by Rabbeinu Avraham bar Natan HaYarchi, the Ra'avan, who lived in Lonil and passed away in the year 4975 [1215]) in the name of Rabbeinu Zerachya HaLevi (the Razah, Ba'al HaMaor) who found in an early manuscript unearthed in Spain, that all of Rabbi Akiva's students passed away from Pesach until "Half of Shavuot," and this refers to half of the period prior to Shavuot, which is thirty days, as the Mishnah tells us, "One must begin to inquire about the laws of Pesach thirty days before the holiday"; thus, half of thirty is fifteen days before the holiday of Shavuot. Several other Rishonim write likewise. Thus, if we subtract fifteen from the forty-nine days between Pesach and Shavuot, the difference is thirty-four. Nevertheless, beginning from the morning of the 34th day of the Omer, it is already permissible to hold weddings, for regarding mourning, the rule is, "A portion of the day is considered like the entire day," and since some of the 34th day has already passed, one need not continue to observe the mourning customs.

The Ashkenazi custom is to begin permitting weddings from the 33rd day of the Omer, for they are of the opinion that the students of Rabbi Akiva ceased dying on the 33rd day of the Omer, as several Rishonim (among them the Sefer HaManhig) write that they have a tradition that they ceased dying on the 33rd day. The Rama (Chapter 493) indeed rules this way. Some Ashkenazim are even more lenient and allow weddings to be held on the night of the 33rd of the Omer.

An engagement party marking a match being made, a.k.a. "Tena'im," may be held during the period of the counting of the Omer, even with musical accompaniment. However, regarding an engagement party held after the match was already set and the couple has decided to marry, it is permissible to hold such a party during these days, albeit without musical accompaniment.

Anger

Our Sages teach us in Pirkei Avot (Chapter 4, Mishnah 4): "Rabbi Levitas of Yavneh says: One must be exceedingly low of spirit." The lowness of spirit mentioned here refers to humility, for anyone who is not humble, besides for transgressing the sin of haughtiness which is a grave sin in and of itself, this can also lead one to transgress all of the sins of the Torah.

One of the sins to which haughtiness can lead a person is anger, which is a repulsive character trait indeed. Our Sages have taught (Nedarim 22b), "One who is angry does not even consider the presence of Hashem important," for when one is angry, one acts completely out of character and acts in ways that never would have occurred to him had he been in his right state of mind. For instance, if one starts to argue with one's wife or other family members, this can sometimes cause one to say inappropriate things that he never would have said otherwise. All this was said in a brief moment of insanity. As a result of the hurtful and insulting things one says, one will need to work for numerous days and nights to repair the damage he has caused.

The Sefer Kol Bo (Chapter 41, quoted by Maran Ha'Bet Yosef at the end of Chapter 299) records an incident that once occurred with a man who was smitten with boils from head to toe and whose entire body was racked by sores and fresh wounds. Once, his wife went on a certain Motza'ei Shabbat to draw water from the well and warm it up for drinking as was customary for all the women in the neighborhood, for the Gemara teaches us (Shabbat 119b), "Hot water on Motza'ei Shabbat heals." At this particular time, water from "Miriam's Well" (which moves around from place to place) found its way into this particular well. The woman filled up her jug with water from this well and started home. Due to the weight of the jug of water, the woman's arrival home was delayed. When she finally arrived, her husband became very agitated about her lateness and screamed at her; she became so scared that the jug dropped from her shoulder and the water spilled in all directions. Only a few drops splashed on the man's skin and wherever they did, the boils there vanished and the skin under them became like as smooth as a baby's. Had he not become angry, he would have been able to drink that water and become completely healed.

We see clearly from this story how terrible anger is, for it can remove a person from this world and it can cause a person to do things that, at the end, will be to his own detriment.

Thus, one must take care to slowly remove anger from within himself until one finds himself calm and tranquil in all of his actions; this will serve to bring peace between one and the rest of one's household.

Judging People Favorably

Since it is customary this time of year during the Omer counting period to publicly expound the teachings of Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) as was indeed the custom of Maran Rabbeinu Ovadia Yosef zt"l, let us discuss some ideas mentioned in Pirkei Avot.

Pirkei Avot states (Chapter 1, Mishnah 6): "Yehoshua ben Perachya says, 'Establish a rabbi for yourself, acquire a friend for yourself, and judge every person favorably.'" Rabbeinu Ovadia of Bartenura explains that when the matter can be seen equally from a positive and a negative point of view and there is no tangible evidence against the individual either way, one should judge him favorably and give him the benefit of the doubt and not suspect the individual baselessly of wrongdoing, as the Torah states, "With righteousness shall you judge your fellow," and our Sages (Shevuot 30a) explain that this means that one must judge one's friend favorably. Additionally, our Sages taught (Shabbat 97a) that the body of one who wrongfully suspects his friend will end up being smitten, as we find that Moshe Rabbeinu said about the Jewish nation, "And they will not believe me," to which Hashem replied that he should place his arm in his cloak and upon removing it, Moshe was smitten with leprosy and only later did it heal. This was his punishment for wrongfully suspecting the Jewish people, for the verse later states, "And the nation believed." Indeed, Hashem told him that they are believers the children of believers. We may from the words of Rabbeinu Ovadia of Bartenura that if the individual is known to be an especially upright and G-d-fearing person, one should still judge him favorably even if doing so in the given situation seems farfetched.

Regarding the incident that occurred with Chana the prophetess, the verse states, "And Chana spoke unto her heart"; our Sages explain that this refers to matters involving the heart, meaning that Chana was praying while gesticulating and this seemed bizarre in the eyes of Eli Ha'Kohen and led him to assume that she was intoxicated. He told her, "Until when shall you be drunk? Remove your wine from within you!" To which she replied, "No, my master, for I am a woman of hardened spirit, but I have drunk no wine nor any other intoxicating beverage." She meant to tell him, "You are not a master and the holy spirit of Hashem does not rest on you for you have judged me unfavorably". The Gaon of Vilna explains that Eli Ha'Kohen actually consulted the *Urim Ve'Tumim* (breastplate of the Kohen Gadol containing a piece of parchment upon which Hashem's ineffable name was inscribed) about the woman standing in front of him, and the letters "הכשר" illuminated from the breastplate. He mistakenly arranged these letters to form the word "שכרה" (meaning "intoxicated") instead of arranging them to form the word "כשרה" which can either mean "worthy" or "like Sarah" meaning that she was barren like our matriarch Sarah was and was praying for a child. Since he interpreted the letters incorrectly, the word "שכרה" emerged. Thus, Chana told him that he was neither a master nor did the holy spirit of Hashem rest upon him since properly encoding the messages provided by the *Urim Ve'Tumim* required one to possess the holy spirit of Hashem. When Eli realized that he had erred, he begged her forgiveness and the Gemara (Berachot 31a) derives from here that one who suspects his friend wrongfully must appease him. Furthermore, one must actually bless the wronged party, as the verse states, "And Eli replied by saying, 'Go with peace and may the G-d of Israel fulfill your request which you have requested from him.'"

One must derive from here the importance of judging his friends and family favorably and not always be demanding and suspicious of them; rather, one should be pleasant with people and always give them the benefit of the doubt. By doing so, one merits being judged favorably in Heaven, as the Gemara tells us (Shabbat 127b), "One who judges his friend favorably will be judged favorably by Hashem." An incident once occurred where Rabbi Akiva was hired as a paid worker by a truly G-d-fearing man for a three year period. This man had many material possessions. On the eve prior to one of the holidays at the end of the third year, Rabbi Akiva wished to depart and he told his employer, "Please pay me my wages so that I may return home to support my wife and children." The man replied, "I do not have money to pay you." Rabbi Akiva replied, "So then pay me with animals or fruits." The man told him, "I do not have these either." Rabbi Akiva told him, "Then pay me with pillows or blankets." The man replied, "I do not have these either." Rabbi Akiva proceeded to sling his pack over his shoulder and sadly started his journey home, empty-handed. After the holiday, the employer arrived at Rabbi Akiva's home bearing three donkeys laden with all sorts of foods, beverages, and delicacies, plus Rabbi Akiva's wages. After eating and drinking, the man turned to Rabbi Akiva and asked, "When I told to you that I did not have whatever you asked me to pay you with, of what did you suspect me?" Rabbi Akiva replied, "I assumed that you had consecrated all of your belongings (to the Bet Hamikdash), and consecrated items are forbidden to benefit from and they are no longer yours." The man exclaimed, "I swear to you that this is indeed what happened; I consecrated all of my possessions because my son, Horkenos, was not toiling in Torah. When I came to my friends, they absolved me of this vow. As for you, may Hashem judge you favorably just as you have judged me favorably."