



Wembley Synagogue

תּוֹרָה

Insights from the commentators into the Sedra of Tazria 5768

What's the Sidra about?

1st, 2nd and 3rd Aliya: The laws of purity and impurity as they pertain to childbirth are discussed. The basic laws of Tzara'at, its diagnosis by a Kohen, the possibility of a quarantine, and the laws of Tzara'at as it relates to healthy and infected skin are discussed.

4th, 5th, 6th, & 7th Aliyot: The laws of Tzara'at as it relates to a burn, a bald patch, dull white spots, and the presence of a Tzara'at blemish on clothing is detailed. (Source: Rav Aron Tendler)

This week's parsha deals with Tzara'at a skin condition that was a punishment for Lashon Hara (gossip) and other sins. The condition rendered a person ritually impure upon the Kohen pronouncing the diagnosis. It is interesting to note that the Metzora's (one afflicted with Tzara'at) fate is sealed with a single word of the Kohen. This is an important lesson for the Metzora. Sometimes one may transgress the laws of Lashon Hara because one doesn't appreciate the importance of speech. We may figure "I did the other party no harm, I just said some words". The fact that the Lashon Hara speaker's fate is sealed with the Kohen's utterance teaches him the lesson on the power of speech. (Source: Dubner Maggid)

The Sidra of Tazria follows the portion of Shemini which deals with kosher and non-kosher animals and the impurities of their carcasses. This parsha deals with various ritual impurities whose source is the human body. The Midrash takes note of the sequence of these two sidrot: "Just as man was created after all the creatures, so too the laws pertaining to the other creatures." This can be explained as follows: Man was created after the other creatures so that he should not be arrogant. Although mankind is the purpose and focus of creation, the fact that man was created last of all - even after a flea - serves as a reminder that he should not be too haughty. The laws discussed in these two portions deal with ritual impurities. The human who is discussed after the animals has the ability to consciously create impurities, generally as a result of sin. Such a person is indeed considered inferior even to animals who -having no free will - do not sin. Therefore, the laws of impurities for animals precede the laws for people. (Source: Torat Moshe)

אָדָם בְּיִרְיָהוּ בְעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאת אוֹר־סַפַּחַת אוֹ בַהֲרֵת וְהָיָה בְעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ לְנֹגַע צֹרְעַת וְהוּבָא אֶל־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן
- When there will be in the skin of a man's flesh a Se'ait or a Sapachat or a Baheret (forms of the Tzara'at disease) and it will be in the skin of his flesh as a plague of Tzara'at (a leprosy - like disease) and it should be brought to Aharon the Kohen or one of his sons the Kohanim (13:2). It is interesting to note that the Torah requires a consultation with the Kohen over a seemingly physical ailment. Indeed, the Kohen's role as a spiritual leader is not at all limited to his service in the Temple because the Torah's tenets encompasses every aspect of life and any issue may involve the teacher of Torah - the Kohen. The Torah therefore directs a person who finds Tzora'at upon himself to show it to a Kohen. The Kohen is to try and detect the sin which lies at the root of the person's troubles. Then the Kohen can instruct the Metzora (one afflicted with Tzora'at) how to cleanse himself from the ritual impurities caused by the Tzora'at as well as how to fix his spiritual problems. Everything that happens to a person is by Hashem's decree. By helping the person to elevate his spiritual status, the Kohen helps identify an opportunity by which the person can gain enough merit to be released from this Heavenly decree. (Source: Darash Moshe)

וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֹּגַע בְּעוֹר־הַבָּשָׂר וְשָׁעַר בְּנֹגַע הַפֶּה לְבָן וּמִרְאָה תִּנְנַע עַמֵּק מֵעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ נֹגַע צֹרְעַת הֲיָא וְרָאָהוּ תִּבְחֵן וְטָמֵא
The Kohen shall examine the mark on (the person's) skin(13:3) The Torah requires a person who suspects that he has tzara'at to show it to a Kohen for his evaluation (Chinuch 169). If a Kohen is asked to rule on the status of an affliction found on the skin of a powerful person

whose retribution he fears, is he permitted to refuse to do so? Similarly, if he notices what appears to be tzara'at on the skin of somebody close to him but doesn't want to rule him impure, may he send his friend to another Kohen, who may not come to the same conclusion, to rule on its status? Rav Yosef Karo writes that in both cases, it is forbidden for the Kohen to excuse himself. The Torah appointed the Kohanim to perform this task, and if approached, they are forbidden to object for any reason. Just as a judge may not show favouritism in ruling on the cases which are brought before him, so too a Kohen must rule on each affliction brought to him to the best of his ability. (Source: Parshapotpourri / Tazria)

וְיָמַמָּה טָמֵא וְיָמַמָּה טָמֵא - And he shall call, "Unclean, unclean." (13:45) The metzora is spiritually contaminated. He is to remain secluded from society, calling out to others not to come close to him. "Tamei, tamei," he calls out, notifying people of his present state. The Shelah Ha'Kadosh extends the interpretation of this pasuk by placing a "comma" between the first and second "tamei." The pasuk would now read, "V'tamei - tamei yikra." One who disparages others, who calls others tamei is generally projecting his own blemished character. In other words, the model behind most lashon hora is none other than oneself. He who has a character flaw will knowingly and unknowingly project this deficiency on to others. He will look for it, and if he does not find it, he will fabricate it. An individual sees himself reflected in his friends' behavior. The Baal Shem Tov says that one who is inherently good perceives good wherever he goes. One who is flawed sees flaws in everyone. Moreover, whatever we see is essentially a message for us regarding our own behaviour. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

כָּל-יְמֵי אֲשֶׁר הִנָּנֶעַ בוֹ יִטְמָא טָמֵא הוּא בְּרֵד יֵשֵׁב מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה מוֹשְׁבֹו - He shall dwell in isolation; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. (13:46) The Torah instructs that a metzora must leave the camp or city for seven (or more) days and sit alone. Chazal say that this is a punishment for the anti-social behaviour of speaking lashon hara. R' Yaakov Emden z"l points out the many benefits which man can attain only when he is part of society. Indeed, Chazal say, "Give me a friend or give me death," and the Torah says (Bereshit 2:18), "It is not good for man to be alone." All alone, man could not obtain all of his physical needs, including proper food, drink, clothing, and shelter. A person also could not fulfill the Torah if he were alone. For example, he could not carry out the laws of property, the laws of marriage, and the laws of child-rearing. A person who is all alone can never pray with a minyan or have his Torah questions resolved by scholars, and thus he cannot properly practice a single one of the six pillars (listed in Pirkei Avot) on which the world stands: justice, truth, peace, Torah, prayer, and acts of kindness. Also, how can man emulate Hashem if he is all alone? For example, just as Hashem is merciful, man must be merciful to his fellow men. Of course, there are times for being alone, but even in those times, man should not roam too far from home. Man is even capable of achieving the concentration that comes from solitude while he is surrounded by people. (Source: Migdal Oz: Perek Aliyat Habedidut)

כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם לְאֶחָהּ וְנָתַתִּי נֹנֶעַ צָרַעַת בְּבַיִת אֶרֶץ אֲחֹתְכֶם - When you arrive in the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession ('achuzah'), and I will place a tzara'at affliction upon a house in the land of your possession." (14:34) The Gemara Yoma 12a learns from this verse: "A house in your 'possession' can become defiled by tzara'at, but a house in Yerushalayim cannot become defiled by tzara'at." Why? Because Yerushalayim was not given to any tribe when the land was divided, and it therefore is not "the land of your possession." (Source: Hamaayan)

שבת שלום!

Shabbat Shalom!



Shabbat starts 7.24pm



Shabbat ends: 8.29pm

לע"נ ר' מרדכי צבי ב"ר חיאל משה וולפסון ז"ל

The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is edited by Chazan Anthony Wolfson

Online at: http://www.wembleysynagogue.org/html/sedra_notes.html