

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



תשפ"ד Tazria

• Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos •

ל"א 285

אמרות שמשון

Why the responsibility of checking the tzaraas was given over to the Kohanim

אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת או ספחת או בהרת והיה בעור בשרו לנגע צרעת והובא אל אהרן הכהן או אל אחד מבניו הכהנים (יג ב):

If a person will have on the skin of his flesh a s'eis, sapachas, or baheres, and it will become a tzaraas affliction on the skin of his flesh; he shall be brought to Aharon the Kohen, or to one of his sons the Kohanim.

We need to understand why the laws regarding the tzaraas were given over to the Kohanim for them to rule upon, whereas the laws regarding all other areas of the Torah were given over to the Torah Scholars to decide upon. Furthermore, the Midrash tells us (ויקרא ט"ו ח'), צער גדול היה לו למשה דבר הזה, ולא כך הוא כבודו של אהרן אחי להיות רואה את הנגעים, אמר לו הקב"ה, ולא Moshe was greatly troubled over Aharon's involvement with examining skin afflictions. He wondered, "Is this befitting the honor of my brother Aharon, to examine people's tzaraas afflictions?" Hashem replied, "And does he not receive the twenty-four priestly entitlements?" Hashem's reply to Moshe definitely needs explanation, as what do the twenty-four priestly entitlements have to do with Aharon checking the tzaraas?

The Midrash (ויקרא ט"ו א') comes to explain unto which sin the tzaraas comes as a punishment, and says as follows. When Moshe cautioned the Jews; זאת תהיה תורת המצורע (י"ד ב); This shall be the law of the metzora, the word 'מצורע' may be expounded as a contraction of 'שם' thus it is as if the Torah wrote; זאת תהיה תורת המוציא שם רע; This shall be the law of the defamer. The Sages thus explain, that the Torah uses the word מצורע in this Passuk, as opposed to the more commonly used word of צורע, to teach us that that it is one who is רע שם who will be punished with tzaraas.

In regards to someone who is רע שם the Gemara in Kidushin (ע"א) teaches us that למי שפסול פסול וכו' ואמר שמואל במומו פוסל - Whoever declares others to be genealogically unfit is himself genealogically unfit. That is, anyone who regularly demeans the genealogical status of other families, reveals himself to be genealogically blemished. The Gemara continues on (ע"ב) and says, בדבקי בני מערבא, כי מינצו בי תרי בהדי הדדי חזו האי מינייהו דקדים ושתיק אמרי האי מיוחס טפי. The following method was used by the people

of Eretz Yisroel when they would investigate someone's lineage; When two people would quarrel with each other, they would see which one is the first to quiet down and they would say, "That person is genealogically purer than the other". Rav said, "The silence and peacefulness of the families in Bavel is the basis for their having been established as possessing genealogical fitness".

The Rambam (פ"ו הלכות תרומה ה"ב) writes, תרומה של תורה אין אוכל אותה אלא כהן מיוחס, – The Biblically obligated Terumah may only be given to a Kohen who is of pure lineage. It is also clearly inferred from the Yalkut Shimoni (פרשה ו) how much more this is so in regards to Kodshim, the priestly portion of the sacrificial offerings, which only a Kohen of pure lineage may partake in.

This is the reason why there was a need for the laws of tzaraas to be given over to the Kohanim, so that they could know who it was that was inflicted with tzaraas, and it would thus be an indication to them that those inflicted were obviously רע, מוציא שם רע, which is a sign that they must have some genealogical impurity in their lineage. This would thereby let the Kohanim know to stay away from intermarrying into those families, in order to keep themselves genealogically pure and eligible to receive all twenty-four priestly entitlements, including the Terumah and Kodshim.

We can now understand the Midrash that says; Moshe wondered, "Is this befitting the honor of my brother Aharon, to examine people's tzaraas afflictions?", to which Hashem replied, "And does he not receive the twenty-four priestly entitlements?", for it is precisely because Aharon and the Kohanim were given the twenty-four priestly entitlements, that they were also given the responsibility to examine people's tzaraas afflictions.

(זרע שמשון פרשת תזריע אות ז)



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There are two types of tza'raas

אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת או ספחת או בהרת והיה בעור בשרו לנגע צרעת והובא אל אהרן הכהן או אל אחד מבניו הכהנים (יג ב):

A person, when there will be on the skin of his flesh a white mark the color of white wool or a white mark the color of the white of an egg or a white mark that is white like snow and it forms a tza'raas lesion on skin of his flesh he should be brought to Aharon or to one of his children, the Kohanim.

On this possuk the Medrash (Medrash Rabah Vayikra 15/4) comments, "this possuk can be understood in light of the possuk (Mishlei 19/29), "nah'chonim la'laitzim sh'vatim"-Punishments are prepared for people who mock..."

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בריאות איתנה
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זיווג הגון
ליסל בת רחל מיכל בת גייל שמואל לוי בן משה וזוגתו נטלי בת איסתר'יה וזוגתו משה וליהפיק בקרוב בש"ק מו"ך אושר ושמחה

בריאות והצלחה
יוסף שם טוב בן שמחה לבריאות איתנה וזוגתו נטלי בת איסתר'יה וזוגתו משה וליהפיק בקרוב בש"ק מו"ך אושר ושמחה

הצלחה וזיווג
אופק פנחס בן בת חן וזוגתו נטלי בת איסתר'יה וזוגתו משה וליהפיק בקרוב בש"ק מו"ך אושר ושמחה

מציאת דירה
רחל בת שמחה לרפואה שלימה וזוגתו נטלי בת איסתר'יה וזוגתו משה וליהפיק בקרוב בש"ק מו"ך אושר ושמחה

In other words, the Medrash understood that there is some difficulty in understanding this possuk and the possuk, "nah'chonim la'laitzim sh'vatim"-Punishments are prepared for people who mock..." resolves this difficulty.

Zera Shimshon asks the obvious question; what is this difficulty and how does this possuk resolve it?

He answers that Chazal were bothered by the fact that it is written in the possuk, "v'adam key y'he'yeh b'ohr besohroh"- A man, when there will be on the skin of his flesh..." and not "v'adam eem y'he'yeh b'ohr besohroh"- "A man, if there will be on his skin of his flesh". This implies that being infected with tzararas is something that will surely happen and not something that just might happen. How can this be? How can the Torah write that there will be people who will certainly not keep the Torah?

The Medrash therefore brought the possuk in Mishlei, "nah'chonim la'laitzim sh'vatim"-Punishments are prepared for people who mock..." that also implies that it is inevitable that there will be sinners who will need punishment and the punishment is just waiting for the right time to pounce on him. This is a proof that there is such a reality that transgressing the Torah and punishment can be certain.

The Medrash continues, When Bnei Yisroel heard the dinim of Tza'raas they became frightened! Moshe said to them, "You don't have to be frightened! These dinim were given only for the idolatrous nations of the world but you can eat, drink, and be happy like it is written, "Rabim mach'oh'vim l'rasha, ve'ha'botayach ba'shem chessed ye'soh'va'venuh"- The wicked experience lots of suffering, but one who trusts in Hashem is surrounded by kindness.

Meaning, when Bnei Yisroel heard that they were destined to contract tzarass they became very scared. How will they be able to endure such pain? Zera Shimshon explains that Moshe reassured them and told them that there are really two types of tza'raas. In the present world the halachos of tza'raas are only applicable to Bnei Yisroel and are meant as an atonement for certain misdeeds, like speaking lashon hara and haughtiness. If people will be careful they will not contract it. The allusion in the possuk, "v'adam ki yee'yeh b'ohr b'sorro sa'ais oh sapacha"- A person, when there will be on the skin of his flesh sa'ais oh sapachas, that it is unavoidable not to be infected with tza'raas, is referring to the End of Days and to the other idolatrous nations that mock Hashem. Such people who will not have faith in Hashem and not accept Hashem's Kingship will surely be infected with tza'raas. However, ve'ha'botayach ba'shem chessed ye'soh'va'venuh the Jewish Nation who have faith in Hashem, will be surrounded by kindness. Therefore, there is no need for Bnei Yisroel to be frightened and as long as they keep all of the mitzvos there is nothing to worry about.

Zera Shimshon asks another question on the wording at the end of the Medrash; These dinim were given only for the idolatrous nations of the world but you can eat, drink, and be happy like it is written, "Rabim mach'oh'vim l'rasha, ve'ha'botayach ba'shem chessed ye'soh'va'venuh"- The wicked experience lots of suffering, but one who trusts in Hashem is surrounded by kindness. Why is it important to know that the Jewish will be eating, drinking and being happy while the others are suffering? The main point seemingly is that idolatrous Nations of the World will be stricken with tza'raas and Bnei Yisroel, who trust in Hashem, will not contract tza'raas? Why does the Medrash mention that they will also eat drink and be happy?

He explains this in light of incident mentioned in the Gemara (Kesuvos 61/A) that the Amora Rav Ashi once saw that another Amora, Mar Zutra was very hungry and that there was a spirit of tza'raas hovering over him. He gave him something to eat to save Mar Zutra from being afflicted with tza'raas. From here we learn that being hungry can cause one to contract tza'raas.

According to this, Zera Shimshon explains, that at the End of Days not only will the ones who believe and serve Hashem not contract tza'raas because of misdeeds but they will eat, drink and be happy and this will protect them even being infected with tza'raas because of their being hungry, like Mar Zutra.

To summarize. Zera Shimshon explains that the Medrash was bothered by the wording of the possuk, "v'adam ki yee'yeh b'ohr b'sorro sa'ais oh sapachas"- A person, when there will be on the skin of his flesh sa'ais oh sapachas, because this implies that it is unavoidable that people will contract tza'raas. He can it be that it is written in the Torah that people will certainly violate it? He explains that this is not a question and the Medrash quotes another possuk that also implies that the Torah knows that people will surely violate it. "Nah'chonim la'laitzim sh'vatim"-Punishments are "on standby" for people who mock.... also implies that "punishment" knows that people will surely violate the Torah and is just waiting for the time to execute the punishment.

The Medrash continues to say that Bnei Yisroel were very scared when they heard that they will inevitably sin and will have to suffer being infected by tza'raas. Moshe, however, reassured them that the terrible suffering of tza'raas is reserved only for nations who in the End of Days will not accept Hashem's rule and the tza'raas in this world is only a type of atonement for certain types of avairos. Therefore Bnei Yisroel will not have to suffer with tza'raas as long as they are careful to keep the Torah.

The last question of the Zera Shimshon is why does the Medrash stress that in the End of Days, when the idolatrous nations will contract tza'raas the Jewish Nation will eat, drink and be happy? He answers that it is because if they won't eat, they might also contract tza'raas not because of their misdeeds but simply because of their hunger.

(זרע שמשון פרשת תזריע אות ד')

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Translated and written by Rabbi Moshe Spira - yomospira@gmail.com

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USA - Rabbi Menachem Binyomin Paskesz 347-496-5657 mbpaskesz@gmail.com
Zera Shimshon c/o Rabbi B Paskesz 1645 48th Street, Brooklyn NY 11204

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