

פרשת תזריע-מצורע

Hillel Smith : Parsha Posters



Yoram Raanan: "Purification" process for a house that is infected with tzaraat



Aaron Ayach- Class of 2020 (Original Commentary)

My chosen focus Pesukim: (Vayikra 13:45-49)

וְהִצְרֹעַ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע בְּגָדָיו יִהְיוּ פָרָמִים וְרֹאשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה פָרוּעַ וְעַל־שָׁפָם יַעֲטֶה וְטָמֵא | טָמֵא יִקְרָא:
כָּל־יָמָיו אֲשֶׁר הַנֶּגַע בּוֹ יִטָּמֵא טָמֵא הוּא בְּדָד יֵשֵׁב מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה מוֹשְׁבּוֹ:
וְהִבְגֵּד כִּי־יִהְיֶה בּוֹ נֶגַע צֶרַעַת בִּבְגַד צֹמֶר א֥וּ בִבְגַד פִּשְׁתִּים:
א֥וּ בִשְׂתִי א֥וּ בְעֶרֶב לַפִּשְׁתִּים וְלִצְמֹר א֥וּ בְעוֹר א֥וּ בְכָל־מְלֹאכֶת עוֹר:

וְהָיָה הַנֶּגַע יִרְקַק | א֥וּ אֲדָמָד־ם בִּבְגָד א֥וּ בְעוֹר א֥וּ־בִשְׂתִי א֥וּ־בְעֶרֶב א֥וּ בְכָל־כְּלִי־עוֹר נֶגַע צֶרַעַת הוּא וְהִרְאָה
אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן:

45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry: 'Unclean, unclean.'
46 All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be. {S} 47 And when the plague of leprosy is in a garment, whether it be a woolen garment, or a linen garment; 48 or in the warp, or in the woof, whether they be of linen, or of wool; or in a skin, or in any thing made of skin. 49 If the plague be greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, or in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, it is the plague of leprosy, and shall be shown unto the priest.

Quick Overview of the Parasha

Tazria begins with the laws concerning the state of purification for women after childbirth in addition to the rituals for the child. Further on, Tazria talks about leprosy and all the laws surrounding that regarding with exact timing of the Cohens visits and punishments, etc.

Analysis

I found it hilariously appropriate to speak on the topic of leprosy a “disease” that causes the infected to be (socially?) distanced from the rest of the tribe. In essence, what occurs is that a Jew speaks lashon hara and the Cohen Gadol checks him during multiple phases and if he is deemed so, the Cohen Gadol separates him from the tribe and sends him out to live by himself. However, it is curious that the Torah mentions the whole process for leprosy culminating in ejection from the camp, one would think that many things would merit being ejected from the camp for instance theft or general annoyance (kidding-ish). So why does it say “וְהוּא בְּדָד יֵשֵׁב מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה מוֹשְׁבּוֹ”. I interpret this to be a sort of equal retribution for the crime. When a Jew defames another he shreds his credibility often resulting in people making him a pariah or well... a “leper”. So just like a Jew slandering another Jew results in detachment so too should the slanderer be exiled from the camp.

Natanya Ruben: Class of 2021 : Chizkuni

Perek 12 pesukim 1-3:

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
דִּבֶּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וְיָלְדָה זָכָר וְטָמְאָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כִּי־מִי נִדְתָּ דֹתָהּ תִּטְמָא
וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל בָּשָׁר עָרְלָתָהּ:

Hashem spoke to Moshe and he told him to tell the people of Israel that a woman who gives birth to a male she is considered unclean for seven days just as she is considered unclean during her menstrual cycle. Then on the eighth day he will have a brit milah.

Chizkuni:

Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai's students asked him why they chose this day and not sooner. He answered them that if they were to have chosen an earlier day then they would not be able to have everyone celebrate as the mother would still be considered unclean. This is recognized as a joyful day but it may seem that the mother and father would be saddened because they could not have marital relations at that time, however as soon as the mother goes to the mikvah they are allowed to resume their normal relations and the whole family can celebrate the occasion. The reason this commandment is repeated is to remind us that it is so important to perform it on the eighth day that it overrides the prohibitions on Shabbat. How then do we deal with the warning of capital punishment if Shabbat is desecrated? Only preparatory activities (for the circumcision) are forbidden on Shabbat whereas the circumcision itself overrides Shabbat so that it can be performed on the eighth day.

I personally like this commentary because it gives a positive yet halachic way to see the significance of the eight days without it just being a commandment. A lot of the things we do seem outdated but this gives a more modern way of viewing it.

Yael Passy: Class of 2021: A Lesson for Today- Modern Comm.

In this week's parsha we discuss the laws of tzaraat the disease that is directly related to gossip and slander. The protocol is that as soon as one notices the discoloration they let the kohen know, the kohen makes a diagnosis and if it is in fact tzaraat they are sent out into isolation from the camp until they are deemed pure again. What I would like to focus on is the concept that stems from this passuk, " he shall dwell isolated; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

וַיֵּשֶׁב מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה מוֹשְׁבֵוֹ (vayikra, 13:46).

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

<https://torah.org/torah-portion/drasha-5760-tazria/>

Sounds of solitude

(Dean of Yeshiva of South Shore and he is a descendant of Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky)

He poses the question why would you send the afflicted person out? He offers one reason which he quickly disproves, which is the fear of contagion but if that were the case he would be sent away far earlier. He then focuses on one specific part of the question, which is he's really wondering if you send him away to isolation he can just doctor his appearance in order to fool the kohen and come out before he's cured. The smart thing would be to just keep him under 24-hour surveillance to ensure the integrity of the process. He explains that we send them away because sometimes they're in a situation, or around people that force them to do bad things. When you're in isolation you're able to think for yourself and truly reflect on who you are as a person and what you've done, yes he could lie and take out the hair and cover up the impurities and come back and ruin the purification process and do exactly what got him in the situation in the first place or he could sit in isolation and wait it out and take the time to reflect, because if he lied the only person he would be lying to is himself.

The important lesson, especially with COVID-19 and all of us being in isolation, is that this is a very good time to reflect on the things we did and the people who we were around. One other thing is that we should take advantage of the fact that there's really no one around that can affect who we are as a person or our actions and try to be the best person we can be.

Coral Yeudai Class of 2021: A modern look at the Metzora

Parshat Metzora is all about ritual impurity, dealing with cleansing from skin diseases, houses with plagues, male discharge, and female menstruation. Hashem tells Moshe that if someone is afflicted with tzaraat, leprosy, they shall go to the Kohen in order to be purified, with a special procedure involving birds, spring water, cedar wood, scarlet thread, the hyssop plant. After that the person still needs to wait outside the tent for several days, then shave, immerse himself in water, thus becoming clean. The next day he shall bring specific korbanot with the help of the Kohen, involving a specific procedure with oil. Then Hashem goes on to tell Moshe and Aharon if someone has tzaarat, by the appearance of dark red or green patches, in their own home, they should go to the Kohen. The house will be cleared out and there is a whole process of nineteen days, in which after is determined by the Kohen if the house can be purified or needs to be destroyed. Lastly Hashem speaks to Moshe and Aharon about both female and male discharge, which are both considered unclean. For the men, they should make sure to immerse anything they had touched in that time, such as his garments, or even other people, who are unclean until the evening, in water, as well as himself. After that there is a seven day period for purification, and on the next day bring specific korbanot with the help of the Kohen. In regards to women, blood discharge is usually a sign of the seven day menstrual period, must go to the mikvah, and they go through the same whole process as the men.

Chana Weisberg, born in 1967, an author of a few Jewish books and international lectures on issues relating to women, relationships, meaning, self-esteem, and the Jewish soul, wrote a modern commentary dvar torah on Parshat Metzora “Experiencing the Highs and

Lows of Life”. She starts off by stating that “Everything has its season. Life is a never-ending cycle of low points that turn into high points, only to revert back again to lows”. For instance, we go to sleep at night, just to wake up to the energy of the day, we work for six days a week, then go into the holiness of shabbat, etc. In Parshat Metzora we are introduced to the halachic terms of tumah, impurity, and taharah, purity, where some of life lows and highs can be defined as. It is important to note that these terms have nothing to do with physical cleanliness, rather are wholly spiritual concepts. Tumah is like the absence of holiness, while taharah is like the readiness to receive holiness. We tend to associate tumah with sin or negatively, but actually many forms of tumah are inherent in the rhythm of life itself. Chana Weisberg goes on to discuss a few examples of tumah and things that would make you ritually impure, such as coming in contact with a corpse, since the soul was the one to provide holiness and vitality, sleeping in which our souls temporarily leave our bodies and when we wake up our hands are considered tameh, since the body itself experienced a lack of kedusha, how men also happen to have the custom to go to the mikvah prior to Shabbat and Yom Tov in order to purify themselves for the “extra holiness”, etc. All of these situations require a form of washing, whether it is just your hands or going to a mikvah. Furthermore, in the era of redemption Hashem says “ “I will sprinkle you with tahor waters,” and “I will remove the spirit of tumah from the land.” (Zach. 13:2) The ultimate purpose of tumah, such as the low points in our lives, is to achieve a higher level, by transforming it. All of these descents are preparation for the ultimate ascent. For instance, relating it back to the parsha, which discusses a woman's status as tumah during menstruation, should not imply sinfulness or degradation, rather it demonstrates her descent from a peak level of kedusha when she has the ability to create a new life within her body.

Personally, I really liked Chana Weisberg's modern commentary, as it conveyed a more realistic and positive approach to Parshat Metzora, which many might find uncomfortable. It is important to recognize that everything in our lives has what seems to be more the negative side, in this case the “tumah”, and what seems to be the more positive side, in this case the “taharah”. Both sides are key factors and I feel that they compliment each other, rather than negate each other, because as we know not everything is perfect, there's always good within the bad, and even vice versa. In conclusion, this dvar torah shows the more mature and honest side of things, which I feel we all can learn a lot from.

Jacob Kupferman (Class of 2023) : Chizkuni

Parshat Metzora deals with purification and the general details of people afflicted with Tzarat as well as purification laws for a discharge from a man and menstruation. The parsha begins with how one becomes pure after tzarat, without too much detail, the process involves 2 stages, which are 3 weeks apart, with various sacrifices and rituals in each stage. The

parsha then tells the different way the purification process can be done by a poor person that involves bird sacrifice instead of expensive cattle along with a few more small tweaks. If a house is afflicted with tzarat in the form of discoloration of stones then a priest is summoned to decide whether it is real tzaraat and if it is then the home is quarantined for 1 week. After this time the priest decides based on the spread of the tzaraat whether the house is pure, if the stones have to be removed, or if the entire home be demolished after this the home goes through a purification process. The next part deals with a man who spills his seed, to sum it up anything his seed touches must be cleaned except earthenware which must be destroyed, anything he touches or sits on is impure, and anyone who touches him or these object is impure and must wash his clothes and go to the mikvah. The man who spills his seed must take 7 days to purify and then bathe in the mikvah and offer 2 bird sacrifices. A menstruating woman has the same laws of impurity as previously mentioned with a man who spills his seed with, the only different detail is that it says any man who sleeps with this woman shall go through the same purification cycle, and the woman's 7 days start at the end of her menstruation.

Leviticus 15:13

My commentary comes from Chizkuni who is believed to have lived in 13th century northern France. His commentaries are largely based on Rashi's commentaries with many explaining Rashi, although he does have very many of his own as well.

In the Pasuk describing the purification process of a man who spills his seed it says that he must bathe in "living(running) water". Many purification processes involve bathing in a Mikvah but Chizkuni says that this impurity is much more severe so a still body of natural water (Mikvah) is not enough.

Because of this it is necessary that running water must be used to more thoroughly clean this impurity from the man. Chizkuni also mentions that although the man must bathe in running water his vessels can be washed in a regular Mikvah.

Nissim Ruben (Class of 2023): Original Commentary

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: דַּבְּרוּ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתֶּם אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי יְהִי זֵב מִבְּשָׂרוֹ זָבָה טָמֵא הוּא: בְּזָבָה כֹּר בְּשָׂרוֹ אֶת־זָבָה אוֹ־הַחֲתִים בְּשָׂרוֹ מִזָּבָה טָמֵאתָ הוּא: בִּאִשׁ יִשְׁכַּב עָלָיו הַזֵּב יִטְמָא וְכָל־הַכֹּלִי אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׁב עָלָיו יִטְמָא: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִגַּע בְּמִשְׁכָּבוֹ יִכָּסּ בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרְב: וְהַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־הַכֹּלִי אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׁב עָלָיו הַזֵּב יִכָּסּ בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרְב: וְהַנֹּגֵעַ בְּבֶשֶׂר הַזֵּב יִכָּסּ בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרְב: וְכִי־יִרְקַח הַזֵּב בְּטָהוֹר יִכָּסּ בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרְב: וְכִל־הִמָּרְכָּב אִשׁ יִרְכַּב עָלָיו הַזֵּב יִטְמָא: וְכָל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּכָל־אִשׁ יְהִי תַחֲתָיו יִטְמָא עַד־הָעֶרְב וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא אוֹתָם יִכָּסּ בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרְב: וְכָל־אִשׁ יִגַּע בּוֹ הַזֵּב וַיְדִיּוּ לֹא־שָׁטַף בַּמַּיִם יִכָּסּ בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרְב

1 And the LORD spoke unto Moses and to Aaron, saying: **2** Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them: When any man hath an issue out of his flesh, his issue is unclean. **3** And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be

stopped from his issue, it is his uncleanness. **4** Every bed whereon he that hath the issue lieth shall be unclean; and every thing whereon he sitteth shall be unclean. **5** And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. **6** And he that sitteth on any thing whereon he that hath the issue sat shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. **7** And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. **8** And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean, then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. **9** And what saddle soever he that hath the issue rideth upon shall be unclean. **10** And whosoever toucheth any thing that was under him shall be unclean until the even; and he that beareth those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. **11** And whomsoever he that hath the issue toucheth, without having rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

The psukim I chose to write about are psukim א through א' which talk about what people should do should they come in contact with a Zav. "The zav is a man who has a whitish, non-seminal discharge." (Chabad.org). The psukim give one repeated outcome no matter how you come in contact with said person, and that is: wash your clothes, bathe, and remain unclean until the evening. I think that these psukim can relate not only to people who come in contact with a zav, but to sin as a whole, if you were to come in contact with somebody who sins, and they either persuade you to sin or you feel as though you could sin because of watching them, you should cleanse yourself spiritually by reassuring yourself that you won't sin the way that they sinned because you saw how they turned out. Basically what I am proposing is that the punishment of a Zav is not just a punishment for the person who sinned, but also a warning to others not to sin in the same way or they will also be punished.