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 נדבת בנימין אלעזר ואיטה סטקר

HE CANNOT JUDGE HIS OWN BLEMISH

**"אִذְمָ כִּי יִהְיָה בַּעַזְרָ בְּשָׂרָו שָׁאת אֹז
 סְפְּחַת אֹז בְּחַרְתָּ וְהַיָּה בַּעַזְרָ בְּשָׂרָו לְגַעַע
 אַרְעַת וְחוּבָא אֶל אַפְּרָן מִכְּהָן אֹז אֶל
 אַחֲד מִבְּנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים"** וַיַּקְרֵא י"ג:ב'

"If a person will have on the skin of his flesh a s'eis or a sapachas or a baheres, and it will become a tzara'as affliction on the skin of his flesh, he shall be brought to Aharon the Kohen or to one of his sons, the Kohanim." Vayikra 13:2

allowed? The difference would be in a case where a Yisrael is an expert at diagnosing blemishes, and he looks at this spot and tells the Kohen that it is definitely tamei. The Kohen, who is ineligible to inspect his own blemish, relies upon the Yisrael, and makes the declaration, "tamei". Is this acceptable? Conversely, what would be the halachah where a Kohen examines his own blemish, but then calls another Kohen to make the official declaration that it is "tamei". Is this valid?

Minchas Chinuch (Mitzvah 173) is of the opinion that when the Torah disqualifies a Kohen from being involved in determining his own condition, it is the final ruling that is the issue. He can, however, inspect and decide the status of the blemish, as long as it is a different Kohen who makes the official declaration of "tamei" or "tahor". He proves this based upon the episode with Miriam, who was afflicted with tzara'as. The Gemara (Zevachim 102a) *Aharon the Kohen was a relative, and a relative is disqualified as if it were himself.* inquires as to who it was that determined that her condition was, in fact, tzara'as. It could not have been her brother, Aharon the Kohen, says the Gemara, because he was a relative, and a relative is disqualified as if it were himself. Now, says the Minchas Chinuch, there were certainly many Israelites who were expert in the shades and symptoms of tzara'as, and they could have inspected her blemish, leaving the final decision up to Aharon. Nevertheless, the Gemara states that Aharon's involvement in the case of Miriam was not allowed. (The Gemara's conclusion is that a great honor was bestowed on Miriam at that moment, as Hashem Himself served as the Kohen in determining her status.)

From here we see that when the Mishnah reports that a Kohen cannot "see his own plagues" it is the final rendering of the decision that is not allowed.

A DEEPER LOOK

**"וְרָא הַכֹּהֵן אֶת הַגָּעַע בַּעַזְרָ הַבָּשָׂר וְשַׁעַר
 בְּגַעַע הַפְּקָה לְבָנו וּמִרְאַה הַגָּעַע עַמְקָה מַעֲרָה
 בְּשָׂרָו גַּעַע אַרְעַת הַוָּא וְרָא הַכֹּהֵן וְטַמָּא
 אָתוֹ"** וַיַּקְרֵא י"ג:ג'

"And the Kohen shall look at the affliction on the skin of his flesh; if hair in the affliction has turned white, and the affliction's appearance is deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a tzara'as affliction. The Kohen shall look at it and declare him impure."

Vayikra 13:3

The Mishnah (Nega'im 2:5) specifically rules that a Kohen can inspect all blemishes, other than his own. Why does the Torah require that his blemish be shown to a different Kohen to be inspected, even if the person afflicted is himself a Kohen?

Let us analyze this Mishnah. What is it about the blemish that an afflicted Kohen cannot do? Is it the observing of the blemish to determine its status that he cannot do, or is it the declaration of its being "tamei" or "tahor" that is not allowed?

Aharon the Kohen was a relative, and a relative is disqualified as if it were himself.

Now, says the Minchas Chinuch, there were certainly many Israelites who were expert in the shades and symptoms of tzara'as, and they could have inspected her blemish, leaving the final decision up to Aharon. Nevertheless, the Gemara states that Aharon's involvement in the case of Miriam was not allowed. (The Gemara's conclusion is that a great honor was bestowed on Miriam at that moment, as Hashem Himself served as the Kohen in determining her status.)

In Meshech Chochmah, Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk notes that the verse seems to be repetitive as it describes how the Kohen is first to inspect the appearance of the tzara'as, but it continues and states that the Kohen is to "look at it and declare it to be impure". What is the meaning of this double seeing of the plague of the skin?

The truth is that the Kohen is to conduct a thorough inspection. This begins with his examination of the discolored area to determine whether or

not it qualifies to be declared impure. “The Kohen shall look at the blemish” refers to this analysis. Once this has been done, the Kohen must now consider the general condition of the person who is afflicted. Based upon the verse (13:13, Rashi) the Gemara (Moed Katan 8a) concludes that it is prohibited for the Kohen to issue a declaration of impurity during the festivals, such as Pesach, Shavuos and Sukkos, for these are times of national celebration, and being declared impure would necessarily disturb one’s ability to enjoy the holiday. Similarly, the halachah is that a man is not to be declared impure from tzara’as during the first seven days after his marriage. Although this is not a situation of national celebration, the newlywed couple is granted this week of clemency from the trauma of dealing with the impure status of tzara’as.

The person must be considered as to whether the condition of impurity is allowed to be declared upon him at this point.

If, after inspecting the blemish, the Kohen knows that it is to be deemed as “impure”, he must once again “look at him (not it)”, for the person must be considered as to whether the condition of impurity is allowed to be declared upon him at this point.

This is the meaning of the double “looking” which the Kohen must provide before making his determination. He must look at the blemish itself, but he must also consider the overall condition and situation regarding the person who will be affected.

THE EARLIER THE BETTER

וְרָאֵה הַכֹּהן בַּיּוֹם הַשְׁבִּיעִי וְהַנֶּגֶע עִמָּד בַּעֲלֵיו לֹא פָשַׂח הַנֶּגֶע בַּעֲרָר וְהַסְגִּיר הַכֹּהן שְׁבַעַת יְמִים שְׁנִינִית יְקָרָא י"ג:ה'

“And the Kohen shall look at it on the seventh day, and, behold, the affliction remained in its appearance, and the affliction did not spread on the skin, then the Kohen shall close him off a second time for a seven-day period.” Vayikra 13:5

him in quarantine for one week, he can already look forward to moving ahead with a ruling of being tahor once the week is over. However, if the person is stubborn and refuses to amend his misdeeds which have caused this plague, the reaction also intensifies. The tzara’as spot will reflect the condition, and the Kohen will declare it to be tamei.

The person can still do teshuvah, but the situation is now a bit more complex.

The lesson for us is that the earlier a person is willing to sincerely consider his misdeeds, the easier it is for the process of teshuvah to succeed. If a person is only willing to respond once the situation has deteriorated, the difficulty in doing teshuvah is likewise increased, and completing the procedure is more of a challenge.

THE APPROBATION

זֶה תְּהִיה תְּזִירַת הַמְצֻרָּע בַּיּוֹם טְהִרָּתוֹ וְהַוָּקָא אֶל הַכֹּהֵן יְקָרָא י"ד:ב'

“This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification: He shall be brought to the Kohen.” Vayikra 14:2

The Rav responded with criticism and reproof. “You want to publish a work on the intricate and complex laws of leshon hara? How can someone as young as you dare to suggest that your work is worthy?” He refused to furnish the Chafetz Chaim with the letter that he requested.

As he was leaving the house of the Rav, he met the Rav’s brother, who was a dayan in the city. The dayan noticed what had transpired, and he spoke up to reassure the young Chafetz Chaim. “Do not be disappointed! My brother always insults and discourages people such as ‘No! It is not true! The brother always insults and discourages people such as ‘No! It is not true! The Rav did not speak yourself...’’ The Chafetz Chaim quickly interrupted him. ‘No! It is not true! The Rav did not speak harshly to me at all! In fact, his words were correct, and I fully understand his viewpoint. It really is not proper that someone my age offer such a sefer for publication.’

Immediately, the Rav’s brother entered into the chambers of the Rav and told him

Resh Lakish said: What is the meaning of “This shall be the law of the metzora”? It means: This shall be the law for someone who brings up an evil name.

Gemara Arachin 15b

Rabbi Yaakov Neiman tells the story of when the Chafetz Chaim completed his monumental work on the laws of leshon hara, and he went to the house of the Rav of Lida to ask for his approval and an approbation. The

No! It is not true! The Rav did not speak harshly to me at all!

of the comments of the young author. They were both impressed with his righteous conduct, and his care and delicate concern for the laws of leshon hara. The Rav called the Chafetz Chaim back and happily provided him with a proper letter of recommendation.

STOPPED IN THEIR TRACKS

The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 16:2) relates the story of a peddler who sold his wares in the neighboring villages surrounding Tzipori. He would proclaim, “Who wishes to buy an elixir of life?” People flocked from all over to buy his unique potion.

At that time, Rabbi Yanai, who was studying Torah at home, called down to him, “Come up and let me purchase your wares.” The peddler responded, “People of your caliber have no need for my wares.” Rabbi Yanai nonetheless continued pleading with him to sell him his wares. Finally, the peddler came to Rabbi Yanai and presented him with a bound copy of Sefer Tehilim and pointed to the verses (34:13-14), “Who is the man who wishes life, who loves days to see good? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.”

Everyone who heard this announcement presumably ceased whatever he was doing in anticipation of the unique opportunity to purchase this amazing product.

Then said Rabbi Yanai, “I have been saying this pasuk all my life, never realizing how simple it was until this peddler came and showed me.” This is why, continues the Midrash, Moshe exhorted Bnei Yisrael with the pasuk, “This is the Torah law of the metzora.” The word “מַצְרָעַ” - “metzora” - is divisible into its component parts, “מַזְרָעַ שָׁם” - one who spreads rumors that damage another’s reputation.

This Midrash and its narrative are famous. They are constantly cited to emphasize the life-sustaining qualities of shemiras halashon. One aspect of the entire narrative, however, is hardly emphasized. The peddler stood in the middle of the street proclaiming, “Who wishes to buy an elixir of life?” Everyone who heard this announcement presumably ceased whatever he was doing in anticipation of the unique opportunity to purchase this amazing product. Didn’t they know that “life” cannot be bought with money? Also, when it became apparent that the peddler’s intentions were simply to emphasize the importance of guarding one’s tongue, why didn’t they berate him for “wasting” their time?

In **Darchei Mussar**, **Rabbi Yaakov Neiman** draws an important conclusion from this Midrash, which carries in it a profound lesson for all of us. Those people were surely on a high spiritual plane. Consequently, they were well-aware of the peddler’s intention. They appreciated the quality of a spiritual life. The mention of an opportunity for longevity was understood as an opportunity for the development of a spiritual life.

HaRav Neiman notes that very few of us would actually stop whatever we are doing just to hear a dvar Torah, or share in a spiritual experience. We are so absorbed in our mundane activities that we are unable to take note of a spiritual opportunity when it appears before us. An observant Jew whose life is guided by the Torah should view material pursuit as a means rather than an end in and of itself.

STRIVING FOR THE HEIGHTS

וַיֹּצְחַן הַכֹּהֵן וְלֹקַח לְמִתְהָר שְׂתִּי צִפְרִים
חַיּוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת וְעַז אָרֶז וְשָׁנִי תְּזַלְעַת אַזְבָּן
וְקַרְא ב"ד:ד

Cedarwood - because afflictions of tzara’as come due to haughtiness. -- Rashi

“And the Kohen shall command; and for the person being purified there shall be taken two live, pure birds, and cedarwood, and a crimson [tongue of] wool, and hyssop.” Vayikra 14:4

In this context, we find that the cedar branches symbolize haughtiness. On the other hand, we also find places where the cedar represents the tzaddik – the dignified and honorable righteous man, as we find (Tehillim 92:13):

“The righteous one flourishes like the palm; he grows like the cedar in the Levanon.” How are these images of the cedar to be reconciled?

The cedar tree grows in a manner whereby it appears as if it is reaching for the sky.

Sefer Torah Ohr teaches that it is erroneous to associate saintliness with feelings of inadequacy or of worthlessness. One who is truly a tzaddik knows and recognizes his talents and strengths. In fact, due to this awareness, he constantly strives to achieve and to grow. Yet, he also knows that (Mishlei 2:6): “For God gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.” If there is any sense of inadequacy, it is not that he is incapable, but rather that he has not fulfilled his potential based upon the God-given talents which have been bestowed upon him.

The cedar tree grows in a manner whereby it appears as if it is reaching for the sky. The date-palm also grows high, but its branches droop downward toward the ground. The message conveyed by comparing the righteous to both a cedar and to a date-palm is that although this person strives to achieve great heights, he does so with a humbled spirit.

Halachic Corner

Pirkei Avos Chapter 2

Zmanim for Parashas Tazria-Metzora 5780				
Krias Shma - Sat.	Tefila - Sat.	Sunset	Sunrise	Sunset
According to the Gaon of Vilna 9:22	10:31	Friday	Sat.	Sat.
According to the Magen Avraham 8:46	10:07	7:41	5:55	7:42

We are commanded to guard our health. (Devarim 4:15) One of the factors in maintaining the good health of one's body is the digestion of food. If it is easily digested, the person is healthy and vigorous, but if the digestive system does not function properly, the person becomes weak, and this may cause a dangerous state of health, י"ח. Food can be easily digested when it is not consumed excessively and if it is the kind that is easily digested. When a person eats too much and his stomach is overly full, digestion is difficult, because the stomach cannot expand and contract properly and grind the food as necessary. This is similar to a fire. If too much wood is placed on it, it will not burn well. Therefore, a person who wants to preserve his physical well-being must take care to adopt a happy medium, eating neither too much nor too little, depending on the nature of his body. Many of the maladies that plague man arise either from eating unwholesome food or from excessive eating, even of wholesome food. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 32:2)

Halachic Corner is dedicated by Benyomin Freeman in memory of his father Gedalia Freeman, ג'ל'ה ב' ק'ר'ש מטיעל, ז' נ' ב' ב' ז'ל'ה. May his memory be for a blessing.

Questions for Thought and Study

1. What are the terms for the four stages of appearances of עַצְרָעַת? See Sforno 13:1
2. How is a Kohen like a מֶלֶךְ (messenger of Hashem)? See Ohr HaChaim 13:3
3. Why is there a large "ג" (Gimel) in the word "הַתְּגַלֵּךְ" ("and he shall shave") in Pasuk 13:33? See Ba'al HaTurim
4. Why does it make sense for the metzora himself to slaughter the עַלְעָלָה sacrifice as part of his atonement? See Meshech Chochmah 14:19
5. What if one's financial status changes while he is in the process of bringing sacrifices as part of his atonement process? See Meshech Chochmah 14:21
6. How is the atonement for עַצְרָעַת of one's house similar to the atonement of Yom Kippur? See Ramban 14:53

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•By בית המדרש לתורה - Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Ben-Zion Rand on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Shifra & Moshe Kaganoff; to HTC Israel Liaison Mrs. Yehudit Mermelstein and her husband Elisha on the birth of a daughter, Esther Malka, and to grandparents, Blitstein Women's Advisory Member, Mrs. Doreen Mermelstein and her husband Moishe; to HTC Board of Regents member Joey Zimmerman and his wife Becky on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Uri & Dina Zimmerman; to HTC Board of Regents member Shmuel Brandman and his wife Rivka on the birth of a great-grandson, born to Eli & Chaviva Margolies; to HTC Board of Regents member Dr. Oscar Novick and his wife Bernice on the birth of a great-grandson, born to Elisheva & Sammy Gershon.

•Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro is not meeting in the restaurant, so we are bringing Torah to you. Please join Rabbi Zvi Zimmerman over Zoom on Thursday, April 30, at 12:30 PM. Topic: "Who Were These Tzadikim: Nadav & Avihu?". Zoom info will be emailed and posted on HTC's facebook page.

•Blitstein Institute is offering a 6-week Post-Pesach Program for young women eager to begin their undergraduate work. Two of three courses offered are available for enrollment for a maximum of six credit hours. These courses are deeply discounted and will be offered via Zoom and other accessible resources. This opportunity is intended to help our community during a challenging time.

•Seminary students and high school seniors can take these Blitstein Institute Post-Pesach Program courses as they concurrently complete their other school requirements. Please note that if you are currently taking classes at another college, you will be unable to take these courses. For more information or for help with registration, please contact Mrs. Beryl Mann (mann@htc.edu).

•Blitstein Institute would like to welcome our students "back to school" after the Pesach break. We hope you have all remained well and are pleased to continue all classes in the distance learning format. Special kudos to Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff for a seamless transition to the online format for all class offerings.

•Blitstein Institute's summer semester begins June 22nd. This 6-week semester allows students to quickly accrue credits. We will determine if these classes will be in person or online in the coming weeks. The summer schedule is posted on the HTC website at HTC.edu/Blitstein.

•By בית המדרש לתורה - Hebrew Theological College announcing that Rosh HaYeshiva Rabbi Avraham Friedman's Sunday morning Gemara Shiur will meet at 9:30. A new nightly shiur, Sunday through Thursday, 8:00-8:30 PM, will start Monday night. We will be studying Makkos in both classes. Use url <https://zoom.us/j/6204846937>, Personal Meeting ID 620-484-6937, or call 773-512-6220 or email friedman.avraham@gmail.com, for updated information. All are invited to attend.

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•The deadline for the cRC's 5780-2020 Rebbetzin Shoshana Schwartz, a"h, Torah Essay Contest has been extended to Monday, May 11, due to the current situation. The contest is open to all seniors in Orthodox Jewish high school programs in the Chicago metropolitan area who plan to attend a Yeshiva or seminary in Israel for the 2020-2021 academic year. Please direct questions to office@crcweb.org.

•By Deja Views announcing The Family "Porchtrait" Project, a 3-Way Win-Win-Win Community Support. You pay for a series of Family Photos→the \$ buys meals from local kosher restaurants→to be delivered to first responders. Photos taken outdoors—on your porch or in your yard, 15-minute session. One neighborhood per day: Sun. - Skokie; Mon. - WRP; Tues. - Peterson Park; Wed. - Lincolnwood. Only 10 families per day. Photographer wearing mask from 6-foot distance. More info: Deja Views.

•Walder Science is dedicated to providing you with online STEM resources to keep your children learning and engaged. Visit our website at www.walderlab.org/daily for daily postings of educational materials and projects including do-at-home science experiments, math lessons, and riddles. Anyone who emails us the correct answer to the riddles or math challenges will be entered into a raffle to win prizes each week!

•Walder Science invites students 6th grade and up to join a free online Coding Crash Course. Learn how to create your own animations and simple games using Java programming language and participate in a weekly raffle to win prizes! Internet is needed to download the program and course material but is not required to work on the coding challenges. Visit www.walderlab.org/coding/ to access weekly course materials and get coding!

•By the Pinkus, Schiller, Jacobs, Chait, Gersten, Wiederman, Zuckerman, Wengrow, Berkowitz, Meyer, Cooper and Albin families in loving memory of Tola Pinkus, טיבא שרה בת הרב טוביה גוטמן נ"ע, on the occasion of her twenty-first yahrtzeit on ט' אייר. Her memory is cherished by all who knew her.

•By Dorothy Starr-Aplebaum, and the Starr and Wagschal families in loving memory of Donald Starr, הרב דוד ביבמן ז"ל, husband, father, and grandfather, on the occasion of his 27th yahrtzeit on ב' אייר. A pure resting in the heaven above, yet always vividly palpable in his family's hearts forever on earth.

•By Inger and Leonard Saphire-Bernstein in loving memory of Dr. Enoch J. Saphire, ז"ל, on the occasion of his thirteenth yahrtzeit on the 7th of Iyar.

•By Alan & Dvora Gold and family, Dr. Rachelle Gold, and Marvin Gold, in memory of our beloved father and grandfather, Jacob V. Gold, ז"ל, יעקב בן יהודא, on the occasion of his twenty-second yahrtzeit on 3 Iyar. (Adas Yeshurun, Anshe Motel, Ateres Yehoshua, Ezras Israel, KINS)

•By Mrs. Fegi Mauer, Rabbi & Mrs. Ari Maryles, and Ms. Chani Mauer in commemoration of the yahrtzeit of Dr. Judy Ginsburg, נ"ע. זכי נשמתה צורחה בצרור החיים נ"ע.

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Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein, נ"ע. May their memory be for a blessing.  
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Answers:

1. Initially a blemish (an appearance) is called a "עֵגֶל". As it expands it is called "עֵרָעַת". As it starts to age it is called "עֵגֶל", As it heals it is called "עֵגֶל אֲפָגָן".
2. When a person arrives at home on Friday night and everything is set for Shabbos, he is accompanied by two angels, one which is accusatory and the other is supportive. One מַלְאָךְ says that it should be this way on the next Shabbos as well. The other מַלְאָךְ then must confirm by saying "עֲגָלָךְ" (or unfortunately vice-versa). (See Shabbos 119b.) The Kohen who represents Bnei Yisrael must confirm Hashem's decision on the judgement of the person afflicted with נַעַת.
3. The large "ג" represents the three situations where a person must shave his whole body. These are a nazir, a metzora, and the tribe of Levi when they were first initiated.
4. The metzora may not enter the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash (הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַשְׁכָנָה) until the blood of his שְׁלֹמֶת (sin offering) is sprinkled. Once that happens, he can enter the courtyard and slaughter his own עַזְלָה sacrifice.
5. If he became poor before he brings his sacrifices, or after the שְׁלֹמֶת sacrifice, he can bring the sacrifices of a poor person (birds). If he is poor and becomes wealthy after bringing the שְׁלֹמֶת, he must bring the תְּאַנְדָּר and the עַזְלָה of a wealthy person (animals). Once he brings the תְּאַנְדָּר of a poor person, he does not need to bring the עַזְלָה of a wealthy person.
6. Just as the גְּזַעַל (he-goat) is sent away to atone for our sins, so too the birds are sent away to carry away all of the homeowner's sins.

Prepared by Rabbi Ben-Zion Rand, Editor, and Mrs. Naomi Samber, Managing Editor
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