

is a single *mezuzah* in the city, it is impossible to burn *all* the booty. This precludes us from designating the place a subverted city.

Having explained the view that there never was a subverted city, the Gemara cites a dissenting view:

אמר רבי יונתן – R' YONASAN SAID: אני ראיתיך וישבתי על תילתה – I SAW A [SUBVERTED CITY], AND I SAT ON ITS RUBBLE.^[31]

A dispute as to whether another Torah law was ever carried out:

במאי אלא הא דתנא – Whose opinion is reflected in the following Baraisa: בית המנוגע לא יהיה – THERE NEVER WAS A TZARAAS-afflicted HOUSE.^[32] ולא עתיד להיות – NOR WILL THERE EVER BE ONE IN THE FUTURE. ולמה נכתב – AND WHY, then, WAS [THIS LAW] WRITTEN? דרוש וקבל שכר – God says: EXPOUND it AND RECEIVE REWARD for doing so.

במאי – Whose opinion does this reflect? רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון – The Baraisa's ruling is in accordance with the opinion of R' Elazar the son of R' Shimon, דתנן – as we learned in a Mishnah:^[33] רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון אומר – R' ELAZAR THE SON OF R' SHIMON SAYS: לעולם אין הבית טמא – A HOUSE NEVER BECOMES TAMEI as a result of *tzaraas* עד שינראה בשתי גריסין על שתי אבנים – UNTIL a *tzaraas* marking THE SIZE OF TWO GRIS^[34] IS SEEN ON TWO STONES בשתי כתלים בקרן זוית – located ON TWO WALLS that form A CORNER. ארכו בשני גריסין ורחבו בגריס – Thus, THE LENGTH OF [THE TZARAAS MARKING] must be at least TWO GRIS AND ITS WIDTH must be at least ONE GRIS.

The Gemara asks:

Mishnah The following Mishnah teaches that if either of a boy's parents has one of several handicaps, the boy is not subject to the law of *ben sorer umoreh*.^[39]

או אלקם או סומא או חרש – If one of [the parents] was missing a hand or was lame, או אלקם או סומא או חרש – [the son] does not become a *ben sorer umoreh*.

The Mishnah derives each of these exclusions from a verse describing how a *ben sorer umoreh* is brought to justice:

והתקשו בו אביו ואמו – As it is stated:^[40] And his father and mother shall seize him. This implies that both parents must be able to seize him and not be missing a hand.

והוציאו אותו – And they shall take him out. This implies that they must be able to walk and not be lame.

ואמרו – And they shall say. This implies that they must be able to talk and not be mute.^[41]

NOTES

31. R' Yonasan disputes R' Eliezer's position. According to him, if a city of idolaters has a *mezuzah* within it so that we cannot burn *all* the property in the city, we fulfill the Torah's directive by burning everything except for the *mezuzah*. Hence, there could indeed have been a subverted city (*Yad Ramah*).

32. In *Leviticus* 14:33-53, the Torah details the laws of a house that contracts a *tzaraas* discoloration on its walls. The house becomes an object of *tumah*, which conveys *tumah* to people or objects within it.

33. *Negaim* 12:3.

34. A *gris* is a bean that is large enough for 36 hairs to grow on it (*Negaim* 6:1); this has been estimated to be a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch square. According to the tradition handed down from Moses, an individual *tzaraas* marking on a person or article of clothing must be at least the size of one *gris* to contaminate the person or clothing (see *Negaim* *ibid.*). Based on various derivations, however, the *tzaraas* marking on a house must be somewhat larger than that to render the house *tamei*. There is a three-way dispute as to the exact derivation (and as to the exact size of this larger measurement – see, however, *Tiferes Yisrael* there §29), and as to the exact location on the stones where the markings can be found. Our Gemara states the view that at least two stones must be so afflicted, each with a *tzaraas* marking the size of a *gris*, but there is a four-way dispute as to the precise meaning of the verse (see *Negaim* 12:3). Our Gemara cites the view of R' Elazar the son of R' Shimon, who maintains that each wall must contain a square *gris* of *tzaraas*, and the two squares must meet at the corner. Hence, the total size of the *tzaraas* marking must be two *gris* by one *gris* (*Rashi*). The Gemara will now explain how he

What is the reason of R' Elazar the son of R' Shimon? Why does he require that the *tzaraas* affliction appear in a corner?

The Gemara cites a Biblical source:

– In the second section of the verse it is written: *wall*, but in the first section it is written: *walls*.^[35] This suggests that the verse is discussing one continuous wall that is in a sense like two walls. איזהו קיר שהוא כקירות – Which wall do you find that is like two walls? הני אומר זה קרן זוית – I would say that this is a corner, where two walls meet to become like one.^[36]

Having explained the view that a *tzaraas*-afflicted house never occurred, the Gemara cites two dissenting views:

אמר רבי אליעזר ברבי צדוק – It was taught in a Baraisa: מקום היה בתחום עזה – THERE WAS A PLACE WITHIN THE BOUNDARY OF GAZA והיו קורין אותו חורבתא סגירתא – AND THEY USED TO CALL IT "THE RUINS OF A TZARAAS-afflicted house."^[37]

More testimony that a house was once afflicted with *tzaraas*: אמר רבי שמעון איש כפר עכו – R' SHIMON, A RESIDENT OF KFAR ACCO, SAID: פעם אחת הלכתי לגליל – I ONCE TRAVELED TO THE GALILEE, וראיתי מקום שמצייניו אותו ואמרו – AND I SAW A PLACE THAT THEY WERE MARKING with a sign AND THEY SAID: אבנים – THEY HAVE REMOVED TZARAAS-afflicted STONES TO THERE.^[38] Hence, both R' Eliezer the son of R' Tzadok and R' Shimon maintain that at least one house in history was afflicted with *tzaraas*.

derives this from the verse.

35. Concerning the original examination of the *tzaraas* (*Leviticus* 14:37), Scripture states: ובהנה הנהגו בקירה הכתה... ובמראהו שפל מן הקיר, And behold, if the affliction be in the walls of the house... and their appearance is deeper than the wall.

36. Based on this verse, R' Elazar requires that a two *gris* by one *gris* marking appear in the corner, with a square of 1x1 *gris* on each wall (*Rashi*). Given this requirement of R' Elazar, the Gemara concludes that it is he who holds that a *tzaraas*-afflicted house can never exist. [Evidently, this is because it is extremely unlikely that an affliction meeting R' Elazar's exacting specifications would ever appear.]

37. I.e. the remains of a house that had been afflicted with *tzaraas* and demolished (see *Rashi*).

38. When *tzaraas*-afflicted stones were dumped in a certain place, a sign would be posted warning people not to walk there. This sign was needed because anyone who passes over *tzaraas*-afflicted stones contracts *tumah* (*Rashi*, based on *Sifre* to *Numbers* 12:12).

39. *Meiri* offers as a possible rationale for these exclusions, the fact that handicapped people can be much less compassionate than others. [Thus, the Torah does not subject their son to execution based on their judgment.]

40. The Mishnah cites the relevant verses in *Deuteronomy* 21:19-20.

41. [Since the Torah dictates that they both make the prescribed statement, their son is exempt if either of them is mute and thus unable to do so.]