

Tazria 2016

1.

### Tummah and mila

Genas Egoz page 277

“when a woman conceives and gives birth to a male etc. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.”

"אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר וכו'. וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו."

Rashi quotes the Midrash Raba that says just like the creation of people came after animals, so too the halachas (laws) of people are explained after the halachas of animals. In this Parsha we are talking about the tummah (impurity) a woman has after she gives birth. This Parsha also discusses the halachos pertaining to a bris milah. When the Midrash states that ‘the halachas of people are explained after the halachas of animals.’ Which ‘halachas of humans’ is the Medrash referring to? Are these the halachos of milah or tummah? The Rabbeinu B’chaya says Milah. Others including the Sifsei Chachamim say it is referring to a woman who gives birth. The question is what is the deeper idea that we can learn from the juxtaposition of the mitzvah of milah and the halachas of animals that are permissible for us to eat? The Midrash Tanchuma elaborates and explains why people were created after animals? If a person merits, we say to him you were created last because everything is prepared for you. If a person doesn’t merit, we tell him the flea preceded you. Meaning even animals were created before you! That’s the connection with the laws of tummah and mila right after the laws of animals!

2.

### Lashon Hara

Why does this parsha follow parshas Shemini? What do the halachos of prohibited foods have to do with tzaraas? The Ohel Aryeh (pages 85-86) quotes Rav Yisroel Salanter Zt’l who explains that **just like we need to be careful about what enters our mouths, so too we need to be careful what exits our mouths! We need to be careful about lashon hara and rechilus. Furthermore, we need to be more careful about what exits our mouths than what enters! If a person eats something unhealthy he can always throw it up. However, something that exits our mouths can never be taken back!**

### Why is someone afflicted with tzaraas considered dead?

The Gemara in Nedarim (64b) tells us there are four people that are considered dead. One of the four people is someone who is afflicted with tzaraas. Why?

Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz Zt’l (Sichos Mussar pages 270-271, mamer 63) explains this severe punishment of tzaraas comes as a result of someone who speaks lashon hara as stated in Arachin (16). This is midah kneged midah (measure for measure), since he spoke derogatorily about others and didn’t see the good in them, he needs to isolate himself outside the camps. Similarly,

the Rambam (Negaim 12, 5) says tzaraas is a punishment for lashon hara because since he wanted to distance the person who he spoke against from others, he needs to distance himself from the Jewish people. The Ohel Aryeh (page 89) says **it is very a difficult for a person to be completely alone, therefore he is considered dead. When a person is isolated from everyone, it is like death.** This is all most comparable to solitary confinement. Furthermore, the Gemara in Taanis 23 quotes Choni Hamagel who said 'give me a chavrusa (study partner) or death.' The Mishna in Avos (perek 6) enumerates 48 lists ways to acquire Torah one of them is with friends! (Regarding the nachash (snake) Hashem said he will eat the dirt. Why is this considered curse? Seemingly this is better and preferable because now he doesn't have to worry about parnassah (sustenance)? The connectionless and bondless relationship that snake will subsequently have with Hashem is the punishment. The snake doesn't have to pray at all. Similarly, here a person has no connection with others and it's like a death!)

-The Gemara in Shabbas (67a) quotes the pasuk that says someone who has tzaraas needs to yell out 'I'm tamei (impure)!' The Gemara explains that he needs to inform people of his pain and then they will daven (pray) for him! The question is why specifically does this individual need to inform people of his affliction in order for them to daven for him? Why doesn't the same apply regarding other sick individuals? The Ein Yaakov quotes the Zohar who answers that **the davening of the metzora isn't accepted at all. That's why he needs to inform others in order that they will daven for him. His Tefilah has no power because he spoke derogatorily of others.** Even though the Berashis Raba (53, 14) states that a sick person who davens for himself is better than others who daven for him? This sick metzora is unable to daven for himself. The Ohel Aryeh (pages 89-90) explains this is why a metzora is called 'closed/locked/מוסגר', because his prayer is locked in shamayim (heaven) and has no effect! Other sick people do not need to inform and publicize their pain to others because their tefilos (prayers) will be accepted. Conversely, the tefilos of the metzora will not be accepted therefore he needs to inform his pain to others.

The Gemara in Berachos (32b) states all of the gates of prayer are locked except for the gate of tears! The question is; if the gate of tears is always open, what's the point of the gate at all? The answer is someone who speaks lashon hara causes such a great damage. The amount of damage caused is immeasurable. This information can spread and be added upon. This is why **the gates of tears have gates; in order to close the gates for someone who speaks lashon hara.** Only if others daven for him, will he have the zechus (merit) of the masses which will protect him. (Rav Yonason Eibshetz (Yaaros Devash Chelek beis derush 6) says if someone cries but doesn't perform true and sincere teshuva (repentance), then we close the gates for him.)

The Shearim Metzuyanim Behalacha says he needs to yell out he is impure because the Gemara in Berachos (8a) says Hashem doesn't despise the tefilos of the masses. Other sick people will have visitors who will daven for them. This is one of the main purposes of visiting the sick! Dissimilarly, the metzora is separate from everyone; he therefore needs to yell out in order that they will daven for him! Similarly, the Gemara in Yuma (75a) quotes the pasuk "When there is worry in man's heart, he should suppress it." "דאגה בלב איש ישחנה לאחריים." One of the explanations the Gemara offers as the interpretation of this pasuk is, to relay ones worries to others. Rashi explains maybe they'll give you advice on what to do. The Mesoras hashas quotes the Aruch who explains that this is in order that they will daven for you!

The Mishna Berurah (intro to chalek alef) writes that without Halacha you can't do anything because there is a right way to do everything. (בלעדו לא ירים איש הישראלי את ידו ואת רגלו.) Similarly, the Mishna in Avos (perek beis) states an ignorant person can't be pious. (לא עם הארץ.) The reason for this is because when one doesn't know the Halacha they will inevitably sin or perform mitzvos incorrectly.

The Steipler (biography titled The Steipler page 80) says it's impossible for someone who doesn't learn not to make mistakes! Rabbi Arush (the Garden of Peace chapter 14 page 315) explains the more preparation a person has the greater chances for success.

**The way we can prevent ourselves from speaking lashon hara is by learning the halachas! This will make us more aware of whether something is lashon hara or not. We will naturally stay away from speaking the prohibited! After a person learns the halachos of lashon hara the barometer for evaluating and realizing if something is lashon hara will drastically increase. If something is in a 'gray area' will think twice before saying it. Many cases we must know the halachos immediately. These halachas are so lemaaseh (relevant)! If you learn through the sefer Chofetz Chaim it will change the way you speak and your life for the better! It will additionally cause an automatic positive ripple effect on your sensitivity towards others.**

Thank you Yair Moshe Ausabel for typing this up.