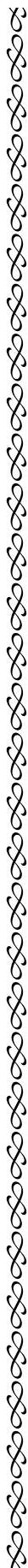




TORAH



חומש ויקרא

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*
וצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

Chumash Vayikra
The Book of Leviticus

Parshat Tazria



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THE TORAH - CHUMASH VAYIKRA
WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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תַּזְרִיעַ Tazria

Overview

The name of this *parashah*, *Tazria*, literally means “She will cause to grow,” referring in this case to a mother’s conception of a child in her womb.¹ The first section of the *parashah* discusses the ritual defilement that a woman incurs as a result of childbirth; the rest of the *parashah* discusses the defilement contracted by a person or garment afflicted with the condition known as *tzara’at*.

Tzara’at is neither any disease with which we are familiar today nor any natural disease that was ever known to humanity. It is a physical condition directly and miraculously resulting from some spiritual flaw, rather than one contracted by a lack of hygiene or by exposure to any physical contagium.

As we have seen,² the Torah discusses two broad categories of defilement: spiritual defilement, which reduces and mars our sensitivity or receptivity to Divine consciousness, and ritual defilement, which renders us forbidden to enter the precincts of the Temple or to consume sacred food. Both of the two types of defilement discussed in this *parashah*—that incurred through childbirth and that accompanying *tzara’at*—are forms of ritual defilement.

The Temple and its rituals are designed to connect us with God, the source of all life and vitality. When we experience an encounter with death, decay, depression, mortality, or some other antithesis of life, the overwhelming confrontation with the apparent futility of life renders us temporarily incapable of participating in the life-affirming rituals of the Temple and the other, ancillary activities associated with it. Similarly, any nexus-point between life and death (such as childbirth) forces us to focus us on our mortality, thereby rendering us susceptible to pessimistic inactivity or depression until we undergo a process of “purification” designed to reorient us toward life, activity, and optimism.

In particular, *tzara’at* imparts the severest degree of ritual defilement: the afflicted individual is not only banned from entering the Temple; he or she is not allowed contact with the community at all. Thus excluded from Temple-life and communal life, the sufferer of *tzara’at* is—as the sages put it³—a walking metaphor for death.

Being that the *parashah* is so thoroughly focused on the particulars of defilement—the consciousness of death, inactivity, and depression—it seems strange that its name, which,

1. Rashi interprets this word differently, as noted in the interpolated translation.

2. Above, 11:1.

3. *Nedarim* 64b.

as we know, should express its general content, is an expression of “sowing,” which is an act of hopeful optimism intended to give rise to new life.



The solution to this enigma lies in the Torah’s general attitude toward reward and punishment. God Himself is the personification of perfect and absolute goodness, and as such, possesses no attribute we could characterize as “evil.” Evil, from the Jewish perspective, is not intrinsic to God, but an entity that He created in order to afford us, His creations, free choice. By the same token, God’s Torah, His gift to humanity, is an expression of His absolute, unmitigated goodness, and therefore, even the apparently negative phenomena we observe in it—threats, punishments, curses—are ultimately expressions of His goodness. The punishments specified in the Torah are all to be understood as corrective—even the various forms of capital punishment, which are only administered when a person has demonstrated that he or she is no longer capable of living properly and therefore needs to be brought to the next stage of existence, wherein his or her soul can progress unhindered toward its ultimate rectification.

In this light, contracting any of the various forms of defilement described in the Torah is not a vindictive punishment, but a signal and impetus to open a new chapter in spiritual growth. The purification process is carefully designed to lead us from a potentially detrimental path back to a positive, healthy mental orientation. It is in this sense that the name *Tazria*, “she will sow,” is indeed an appropriate name for a *parashah* that is wholly devoted to the details of defilement.

This appropriateness becomes all the more evident when we consider the fact that, as mentioned, the whole phenomenon of *tzara’at* is miraculous, having nothing to do with the normal processes of nature. If God “goes out of His way” to give us this indication that it is time to turn over a new leaf, we can appreciate how *tzara’at* is truly an opportunity for spiritual renewal and rebirth, altogether justifying the name *Tazria* for the *parashah*.⁴



A further reason why this *parashah* is aptly entitled *Tazria* is because sowing (together with the subsequent tasks necessary to ensure that the seed germinates and matures) is the epitome of arduous work.

This being the case, sowing can be seen as a metaphor for the difference between animal existence and human existence. Although animals think and feel, they do not possess the same degree of free choice that human beings do; they cannot oppose God’s will. Human beings, in contrast, can freely oppose God’s will, and if left to their own devices they will largely ignore it. They therefore need to be trained and refined in order to live up to their spiritual potential.

As an expression of this inborn inferiority to animals, human beings were the last to be created during the week of Creation. Of course, it is possible to posit precisely the opposite: that human beings were created last because they are the pinnacle of creation, and indeed, the sages articulate both perspectives. The difference between the two perspectives is that human beings can be considered superior to animals by virtue of the Divine gift with which only they have been endowed (their soul), while they can be considered inferior to animals due to their unique capacity to sin and propensity to do so.

4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, p. 70-80.

The fact that the laws concerning the defilement of animals, which appear in the preceding *parashah*, *Shemini*, precede the laws concerning the defilement of human beings, which appear in this *parashah*, can be understood as an expression of the perspective that humans are inferior to animals. Inasmuch as human beings are able to disobey God's will, much more effort is required to refine them than is required to refine or elevate an animal. The Torah therefore treats the simpler laws pertaining to animals before treating the more complex laws pertaining to people.

On the other hand, the fact that the laws of human defilement are presented after those of animal defilement can also be understood as an expression of the other perspective, in which humans are superior to animals. Precisely because we human beings possess free choice, we are capable of reaching much greater spiritual heights than animals, simply because overcoming the innate disadvantage of being capable of sin requires summoning greater spiritual potential than merely living out one's predestination.

This effort is alluded to in the name *Tazria*, for nurturing a seed after it is sown until it grows into a mature plant requires long, hard work, just as revealing and cultivating our innate potential requires prolonged, arduous effort.

In this light, both perspectives—namely, that we were created last either because of our inferiority or superiority to the rest of creation—are one. It is our inborn inferiority that, if we capitalize on it successfully, ultimately enables us to reveal our innate superiority as human beings created in God's image.

This potential is also alluded to in the name *Tazria*, since just as the new life that begins when we sow a seed becomes manifest only much later, after much effort has been expended, so does the innate potential of the soul become manifest only after we have expended great effort in refining ourselves, overcoming our inborn animalistic tendencies, and making ourselves and our world into God's true home.⁵

5. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 74-79.

ONKELOS

12:1 ומליל י"י עם משה למימר:
 2 מליל עם בני ישראל למימר
 אתתא ארי תעדי ותליד דכר ותהי
 מסאבא שבעא יומין כיומי רחוק
 סאובתה תהי מסאבא: 3 וביומא
 תמינא יתגור בסרא דערלתה:
 4 ותלתין ותלתא יומין תתיב
 בדם דכו בכל קדשא לא תקרב
 ולמקדשא לא תעול עד משלם
 יומי דכותה:

12:1 וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 2 דְּבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וַיֵּלְדָה זָכָר וַטְּמְאָה
 שְׁבַע־עַת יָמִים בֵּימֵי נְדָת דִּוְתָהּ תִטְמָא: 3 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי
 יִמּוֹל בְּשָׂר עַרְלָתוֹ: 4 וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּשֵׁב
 בְּדָמֵי טְהָרָה בְּכָל־קֹדֶשׁ לֹא־תִנָּע וְאֶל־הַמִּקְדָּשׁ לֹא
 תִבֵּא עַד־מְלֵאת יְמֵי טְהָרָה:

RASHI

4 תשב. אין "תשב" אלא לשון עכבה, כמו: "ותשב
 בקדש", "וישב באלני ממרא": בדמי טהרה. אף על
 פי שרואה דם — טהורה: בדמי טהרה. לא מפיק ה"א,
 והוא שם דבר כמו "טהר": ימי טהרה. מפיק ה"א, ימי
 טהר שלה: לא תגע. אזהרה לאוכל, כמו ששנויה
 ביבמות: בכל קדש וגו'. לרבות את התרומה, לפי
 שזו טבולת יום ארף שטבילה לסוף שבעה, ואין
 שמישה מעריב לטהרה עד שקיעת החמה של
 יום ארבעים, שלמחר תביא את כפרת טהרתה:

2 אשה כי תזריע. אמר רבי שמלאי: בשם שזיצרתו
 של אדם אחר כל בהמה חיה ועוף במעשה בראשית,
 כך תורתו נתפרשה אחר תורת בהמה חיה ועוף: כי
 תזריע. לרבות שאפלו ילדתו מחוי, שנמקה ונגעשה
 כמין זרע, אמו טמאה לדה: בימי נדת דויתה תטמא.
 כסדר כל טמאה האמורה בנדה, מטמאה בטמאת
 לדה, ואפלו נפתח הקבר בלא דם: דויתה. לשון דבר
 הזב מגופה. לשון אחר: לשון מדה וחלי, שאין אשה
 רואה דם שלא תחלה ראשה ואברייה כבדין עליה:

1. דברים א, מו. 2. בראשית יג, יח. 3. עה, נ.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

her ritually defiled; in fact, contact with it does not render anyone ritually defiled: it is undefiled blood. On the other hand, she is not allowed to enter the Tabernacle precincts or partake of consecrated or sacrificial food. She is in a prolonged state of defilement, having done all she is required to do but simply awaiting the prescribed amount of time to pass before resuming her full participation in spiritual living.

This paradoxical state is reminiscent of our prolonged exile. We have undergone all the purification processes that exile is meant to accomplish,

and are now waiting for the required amount of time (and whatever providential experiences it is meant to bring) to pass. In the meantime, we are not allowed to rebuild and reenter the Temple nor partake of consecrated or sacrificial food.

In order to hasten this passage of time, we need to behave as the new mother does with regard to her post-immersion bleeding. We may indeed "see blood," i.e., encounter aspects of the physical world that under normal circumstances we could not prevent from "defiling" us, i.e., distracting us from God and weakening our Divine consciousness. But

INNER DIMENSIONS

[4-5] **She will remain:** The Hebrew word used here for "remain" (תשב) means "sit." The Torah frequently employs the image of God "sitting"; this image is meant to convey either of two notions: that of descent, similar to how we lower ourselves to sit "down"; or that of changelessness, as in the idiom of sitting "still."⁹ These two connotations of sitting allude to the two types of Divine creative energy ("light"): immanent light (*memalei kol almin*), which descends to enliven all aspects of creation, no matter how low their spiritual consciousness; and transcendent light

(*sovev kol almin*), which is unchanged by creation, enveloping all reality at once and equally.

Both these types of light are produced through processes of constraint, albeit of different varieties. God creates His transcendent light by willing it to shine; this act of will is a self-imposed focusing of His undifferentiated primal self-revelation on the act of creation. We may thus describe it as a "qualitative" constraint; the light is not limited in intensity, but it is focused on creation rather than on anything else. In contrast, God creates His immanent light by constricting

9. *Sefer HaChakirah*, 80b ff.

Defilement Contracted by Childbirth

12:1 God spoke to Moses, saying:

2 **“Speak to the Israelites, saying:** ‘Returning to the laws of ritual defilement, we will now discuss the ways in which the human body itself becomes a source of ritual defilement.¹

If a woman miscarries even a dissolved fetus (and, all the more so, a fully formed fetus) **or successfully gives birth to a male child, she becomes ritually defiled** and remains so **for seven days**. Specifically, **she becomes ritually defiled to the same degree as** she does during **the days of her menstrual flow**, as will be explained later,² even if she did not bleed during the birth.

3 **On the eighth day** after the birth of a viable boy, **the flesh of his foreskin must be circumcised.**³

4 She must immerse herself in a *mikveh* after seven full days have passed since she gave birth; this immersion purifies her from the ritual defilement caused by the birth. **For the following 33 days, she will remain in** a transitional state, during which defilement-by-bleeding is deferred⁴ and her uterine **blood** is therefore **not** a source of **defilement** should she bleed. After the 40th day from birth, uterine bleeding will once again ritually defile her, as will be explained later.

Normally, once someone has immersed in a *mikveh* in order to purify himself of ritual defilement, he is permitted to eat *terumah*⁵ after nightfall (if he is a priest or qualifying member of his household),⁶ and he is permitted to eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts the following morning. In the case of a woman who gives birth to a boy, however, these cutoff points are delayed: **she may not eat any consecrated food, nor may she enter the Sanctuary, until the 40 days of her purification** from this form of ritual defilement **have been completed**. Thus, she may only eat *terumah* after nightfall following the 40th day, and she may only eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts the following morning.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

4-5 **She will remain in this state:** This post-immersion period is an anomaly. On the one hand, the

woman can be bleeding, yet this uterine blood—unlike other types of uterine blood—does not render

✧ A CLOSER LOOK ✧

[2] **To the same degree as she does during the days of her menstrual flow:** After the woman immerses herself in a *mikveh* following the completion of the week following the birth,⁷ she is technically permitted to resume marital relations with her husband, even if she continues to bleed for some time afterward. Furthermore, for the duration of her “non-defiling-blood” period (40 days for the birth of a boy and 80 days for the birth of a female), marital relations are permitted

even if bleeding resumes after having stopped. However, inasmuch as Jewish practice (which, in this case as in many others, has been enshrined in Jewish law) applies the menstrual restrictions on marital relations to *any* sighting of blood, as will be explained later,⁸ a woman who gives birth must wait until she has ceased bleeding totally (and then wait a full week) before immersing in a *mikveh* and resuming marital relations.

1. See above, 11:1. 2. Below, 15:19-24. 3. Genesis 17:1-14. 4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 80-88. 5. Exodus 22:28; Numbers 18:12; Deuteronomy 18:14. 6. Below, 22:7. 7. Below, v. 4. 8. Below, on 15:19.

ONKELOS

5 ואם נקבתא תליד ותיהי מסאבא ארבעה עשר כרוחוקה ושתין ושתא יומין תתיב על דם דכו: 6 ובמשלם יומי דכותה לברא או לברתא תייתי אמר בר שתה לעלתא ובר יונה או שפנינא לחטאתא לתרע משכן זמנא לות כהנא: 7 ויקרבנה קדם יי ויכפר עלה ותדכי מסאובת דמוזא דא אורייתא דילדתא לדבר או לנוקבא: 8 ואם לא תשכח ידה כמסת אמרא ותסב תרין שפנינן או תרין בני יונה חד לעלתא וחד לחטאתא ויכפר עלה כהנא ותדכי:

5 וְאִם-נִקְבָּה תֵּלֵד וּמִמָּאָה שְׁבַעִים פְּנֵדְתָהּ וְשִׁשִּׁים יוֹם וְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּשֵׁב עַל-דְּמֵי מִתְהַרָּה: 6 וּבִמְלֵאת א יְמֵי מִתְהַרָּה לְבֶן אִו לְבֵת תִּבְיֵא כְּבֶשֶׂת בֶּן-שָׁנָתוֹ לְעֵלָה וּבֶן-יֹנָה אֲוִתֶר לְחַטָּאת אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד אֶל-חֶבְהֹן: 7 וְהִקְרִיבֹו לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְכִפֵּר עָלֶיהָ וּמִתְהַרָּה מִמִּקְרַדְמֶיהָ זֹאת תִּזְרֹת הַיְלָדֹת לְזָכָר אִו לְנִקְבָּה: 8 וְאִם-לֹא תִמְצָא יְדֵהָ דֵי שֶׁהָ וְלִקְחָה שְׁתֵּי-תָרִים אִו שְׁנֵי בְנֵי יֹנָה אֶחָד לְעֵלָה וְאֶחָד לְחַטָּאת וְכִפֵּר עָלֶיהָ חֶבְהֹן וּמִתְהַרָּה: פ

RASHI

8 אֶחָד לְעֵלָה וְאֶחָד לְחַטָּאת. לא הקדימה הכתוב אלא למקרא, אבל להקרב — חטאת קודם לעולה, כך שנינו בנבחים בפרק "כל התדיר":

7 והקריבו. למדך שאין מעבירה לאכל בקדשים אלא אֶחָד מֵהֶם, וְאִי זֶה הוּא? זֶה חַטָּאת, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וְכִפֵּר עָלֶיהָ וּמִתְהַרָּה", מִי שְׁהוּא בָּא לְכַפֵּר, בּו הַטְּהָרָה תְּלוּיָהּ: וּמִתְהַרָּה. מִכָּלֵל, שְׁעַד כָּאֵן קְרוּיָה טְמֵאָה:

.4, ג, א.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

and the final Redemption will be ushered in.¹²

7 **She was considered "defiled":** Although ideally, every Jew should be ritually pure at all times in order to be able to enter the Temple precincts and experience the heightened spiritual consciousness attainable there, the Torah does not normally require a person who has become ritually defiled to rush to rid himself of defilement at the earliest opportunity. (The exception is the pilgrim festivals, for which all Jews are required to be undefiled in order to be able to partake of the sacrifices that must be offered up on these occasions.¹³)

In the case of the new mother, however, since the Torah considers her "defiled"—even though in name only—and considers her not to have completed her atonement process during her extended

purification period, it is clear that she is encouraged to offer up her sin-offering at the earliest permissible opportunity.

The sages teach us that in some sense God fulfills all the commandments He obligates us to perform. Thus, if He urges the new mother to complete her purification process at the earliest opportunity, not to spend even one extra moment deprived of the opportunity to enter the Temple and partake of its holiness, euphoria, and exhilaration, it follows that He is equally anxious to redeem us from our exile so we can "join Him," so to speak, both in the rebuilt Temple and in our spiritually elevated lives, which will also become His "Temple" with the advent of the messianic era. The only reason He delays our redemption is in order that we, too, yearn to be redeemed immediately.¹⁴

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] the intensity of the transcendent light; we may therefore describe it as a "quantitative" constraint.¹⁵

The woman who gives birth, in this context, is an allegory for how God creates the universe: her "remaining"/"sitting" alludes to the two varieties of constraint that produce the two types of

Divine light that create and sustain the world.

The purpose of both of these acts of constraint is to create a world antithetical to Divine consciousness and revelation, which can then be transformed into being consummately conducive to Divine consciousness and revelation.¹⁶

12. Likutei Sichot, vol. 7, pp. 90-91. 13. Deuteronomy 14:8. 14. Likutei Sichot, vol. 27, pp. 85-87. 15. Torat Shalom, p. 147. 16. Likutei Sichot, vol. 7, pp. 88-90.

5 If she gives birth to a female child, she becomes ritually defiled—to the same degree as she does during her menstruation period—and remains so for two weeks instead of one. She must immerse herself in a *mikveh* after these two weeks have passed; this immersion purifies her from the ritual defilement caused by the birth. Her transitional period, too, is twice that of a woman who gives birth to a boy: **she will remain in** this state—during which defilement-by-bleeding is deferred, her uterine **blood is not** a source of **defilement**, and she is forbidden to eat consecrated food or enter the Sanctuary—for **66** additional **days**. Similarly, she may only eat *terumah* after nightfall following the 80th day, and she may only eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts the following morning.

6 When the period of her purification has been completed, whether the 40 days for a son or the 80 days for a daughter, then, the following morning (i.e., of the 41st or 81st day, respectively), **she must bring a sheep in its first year as an ascent-offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin-offering to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and give them to the priest.** Although the woman has committed no sin by giving birth, she is nevertheless required to bring a sin-offering in order that the birth contribute toward the eventual full atonement for Eve's sin of having eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, part of the corrective punishment for which was that childbirth be painful.¹⁰

7 The priest **must first offer up** the sin-offering **before God and thereby effect atonement for her.** Inasmuch as until this point she was forbidden to eat sacrificial meat or enter the Tabernacle precincts, she was considered “defiled” in that regard. Thus—through the sin-offering—**she will be purified**, not only in fact but also in name, **from** the ritual defilement that she contracted when she delivered a child from **the source of her blood**,¹¹ and from that time on be allowed to eat sacrificial meat and enter the Tabernacle precincts. After offering up her sin-offering, the priest must offer up her ascent-offering. **This is the law that applies to a woman who gives birth, whether to a male or a female.**

8 If she cannot afford a sheep for her sin-offering, **she may**—instead of bringing a sheep for an ascent-offering and a fowl for a sin-offering—**take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and offer up one as an ascent-offering and one as a sin-offering. The priest must first effect atonement for her through the sin-offering and she will thus be rid of this defilement.** He must then offer up the ascent-offering on her behalf.’”

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

when we encounter such aspects of life, we must nonetheless remain undefiled: we should pay their enticements no mind, remaining staunchly true to our true selves and our Divine mission.

By not succumbing to the allurements of the mate-

rial world, we will be able to proceed to the next stage in this process: elevating the material world itself, transforming it into an expression of Divinity (i.e., revealing that the “blood” itself is undefiled).

The required period of waiting will then be over,

¹⁰. Genesis 3:1-16; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 85. ¹¹. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 80-86.

ONKELOS

13:1 ומליל יי עם משה ועם אהרן
 למימר: 2 אנש ארי יהי במשך
 בסרה עמקא או עדיא או בקרא
 ויהי במשך בסרה למכתש סגירו
 ויתמי לות אהרן כהנא או לות
 חד מבגוהי כהניא:

13:1 וַיִּדְבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: 2 אָדָם
 בִּי־יְהִיָּה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ שְׂאֵת אוֹ־סַפְּחַת אוֹ בְהֵרַת וְהִיָּה
 בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ לִנְגַע צָרַעַת וְהוּבֵא אֶל־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ
 אֶל־אֶחָד מִבְּנָיו הַכֹּהֲנִים:

RASHI

2 שְׂאֵת אוֹ סַפְּחַת וגו'. שְׂמוֹת נְגָעִים הֵם, וְלִבְנוֹת זֶה
 מִזֶּה: בְּהֵרַת, חֶבְרָבוֹרוֹת, ט"א בְּלַעֲזֵ, וְכֵן: "בְּהִיר הוּא
 5. קָתֵם. 6. אִיבֵל, כֹּא.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

2 Individuals of otherwise sterling character: The task of refining ourselves, of realizing the Torah's vision for us as human beings, is long and arduous, but entirely possible to implement. The Torah itself testifies that fulfilling its instructions "is not in heaven...not beyond the sea...but very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, [making it easy for you] to fulfill it."³¹ Moreover, at each step of the way, God assists us in navigating the subtle pitfalls that threaten to thwart our progress. In the words of the sages, "When someone sets out to purify himself, he is assisted from above."³²

This principle is demonstrated clearly by the phenomenon of *tzara'at*, which affects only individuals who have refined themselves as much as they can using all the resources available to them: the study of the Torah; the practice of its commandments; introspection; repentance; the cultivation of ethical conduct in business and personal life; the development of mature faith, trust in God, devotion to one's Divine mission and alacrity in performing it, and so on. Utilizing all these tools to the fullest, the individual might eventually purge all the dross from his psyche, thereby transforming himself into

A CLOSER LOOK

[2] Wool-white spot: When two patches of color are placed side by side, the darker-colored area will appear raised relative to the lighter-colored area. Thus, the Hebrew word for a wool-white spot (*שאה*) literally means "raised": since its whiteness is less intense than that of the *baheret*, it therefore appears raised in comparison to it—even though it appears sunken compared to the

unaffected, surrounding skin.³³

An area: This area is further equated with the average area covered by 36 hairs (6 hairs by 6 hairs) as they grow naturally on the body. The spot need not be a perfect square, but if it is less than 6 hairs wide, it is not considered *tzara'at*, no matter what its length.³⁴

INNER DIMENSIONS

[2] Tzara'at: Although *tzara'at* does not result from any natural physiological condition, when Divine providence decrees that this condition appear on a person, the resulting lesion is produced by limiting the circulation of blood in the area, which then turns white. This obstruction is, in turn, the physical manifestation of its corresponding spiritual antecedent: the obstruction of the flow of Divine consciousness from *chochmah* to *binah*. This is alluded to by the fact that one of the Names of God associated with *binah* is *Ekyeh* (אהיה); the numerical value of the regressive iteration of this Name (אהיה + אהי + אה + א) is 44,

the numerical value of the word for "blood" (דם). The psychological equivalent of this blockage between *chochmah* and *binah* occurs when we contemplate, as we should, God's transcendence and how He manifests Himself in creation, but our heightened awareness of God's presence does not cause us to feel nullified within that presence.

When this self-nullification is lacking, our enhanced awareness of God can actually inflate our ego even further, instead of nullifying it as it should. In the words of the sages, "If [the student] merits, [the study of the Torah] acts for him

31. Deuteronomy 30:12-14. 32. *Shabbat* 104a. 33. *Sifra*, *Vayikra* 13:2. 34. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 1:7-8.

Tzara'at that Develops out of a White Dermal Lesion

13:1 **God spoke to Moses**, instructing him to convey His words¹⁷ to Aaron, saying: 2 "In addition to contracting ritual defilement through birth,¹⁸ death,¹⁹ or certain discharges from the reproductive organ,²⁰ the possibility will exist, from now on, for a person or his or her possessions to become ritually defiled by a condition termed *tzara'at*, the symptoms of which are specific types of lesions or discolorations, as follows. This condition specifically affects individuals of otherwise sterling character and moral excellence who have committed the sin of gossip, slander,²¹ or haughtiness.²² If *tzara'at* appears on their bodies, it will appear on their heads if they are guilty of haughtiness and elsewhere if they are guilty of gossip or slander.²³ It is an entirely spiritual, miraculous condition, unrelated to any natural disease and with no physiological cause.

If a person develops (a) a wool-white spot, (b) an egg-membrane-white spot, (c) a snow-white spot, (d) a lime-white spot, or (e) a spot of any of these four degrees of whiteness tinged with red streaks—but not so many red streaks that the spot loses its white appearance²⁴—**on the skin of his flesh**, covering at least an area equivalent to a square the length of each of whose sides is equal to the diameter of a Cilician bean²⁵ [i.e., 154 mm² or 0.24 in²], **and** it seems, according to the symptoms that will be described presently, that **it forms a lesion of *tzara'at* on the skin of his flesh, he must be brought to Aaron the high priest, or to one of his sons, the regular priests**, or their successors, for only they are authorized to pronounce someone or something defiled or undefiled on account of *tzara'at*. (Nonetheless, if a priest erroneously pronounces someone undefiled who is in fact defiled, his declaration is ineffective.²⁶)

Hebrew Name	Translation	Degree of Whiteness ²⁷
בהרת	bright spot	shiny like snow
ספחת של בהרת	adjunct to bright spot	shiny like lime
שאת	raised (-looking) spot	dull like clean, white wool
ספחת של שאת	adjunct to raised (-looking) spot	dull like an egg membrane

Figure 1. White Lesions that can Become *Tzara'at*, in Decreasing Order of Whiteness

Since the priest must examine the lesion before pronouncing the person defiled or undefiled, a blind priest is disqualified from rendering judgment in cases of lesions suspected to be *tzara'at*.²⁸ The priest may not examine someone or something suspected of suffering from *tzara'at* during the festivals, nor may he inspect a bridegroom (or any of the bridegroom's possessions) during the seven days of rejoicing following the bridegroom's wedding.²⁹

A spot that is darker white than any of these four degrees of whiteness is a simple lack of pigmentation, which cannot develop into *tzara'at*.³⁰

17. Rashi on 1:1, above. 18. Above, 12:1-7. 19. Above, 5:2-3; 11:24-40; below, 17:15, 22:8; Numbers 19, 5:1-4. 20. Above, 5:3; below, 15:1-33. 21. Rashi on v. 46, below; see Numbers 12:10. 22. Rashi on 14:4, below. 23. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 99. 24. Below, vv. 19, 42-43; Rashi *ad loc.*; *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:4. 25. *Negaim* 6:1; *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 14:1; *Shiurei Torah* 3:20 (pp. 233-239). 26. Rashi on v. 37, below. 27. *Negaim* 1:1.28. Rashi on v. 12, below; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 85-86. 29. Rashi on v. 14, below. 30. Below, vv. 38-39.

— ONKELOS —
 3 וַיִּחַזֵּי כִּהְנֵא ית מִכְתָּשָׂא בַּמִּשְׁךְ
 בְּסָרָא וְשַׁעַר בְּמִכְתָּשָׂא אֲתֵּיפִיד
 לְמַחֲזֹר וּמְחַזֵּי מִכְתָּשָׂא עִמָּיִק
 מִמִּשְׁךְ בְּסָרָה מִכְתָּשׁ סְגִירוּתָא
 הוּא וַיִּחַזְּנָה כִּהְנֵא וַיִּסָּב יָתָה:

3 וּרְאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנִּגַּע בְּעוֹר־הַבָּשָׂר וְשַׁעַר בְּנִגַּע הַפֶּה |
 לָבֵן וּמְרֵאָה הַנִּגַּע עִמָּךְ מֵעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ נִגַּע צָרַעַת הוּא |
 וּרְאֵהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְטִמְּא אֹתוֹ:

— RASHI —
 הַצֵּל: וְטִמְּא אֹתוֹ. יֵאמֵר לוֹ: טִמְּא אֹתָהּ. שֶׁשַּׁעַר לָבֵן
 סִימָן טִמְּאָה הוּא, גְּזֵרַת הַכֹּתֹב:

3 וְשַׁעַר בְּנִגַּע הַפֶּה לָבֵן. מִתְחַלְּקָה שְׂחֹר וְהַפֶּה לָלָבֵן
 בְּתוֹךְ הַנִּגַּע, וּמַעוֹט "שַׁעַר" שְׁנַיִם: עִמָּךְ מֵעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ.
 כֹּל מְרֵאָה לָבֵן עִמָּךְ הוּא, כִּמְרֵאָה חֲמָה עִמָּךְ מִן

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

ger occurs: since the destruction of the Temple, it is simply not possible for us to refine ourselves so consummately that the only imperfections left within us are those that are signaled by the onset of *tzara'at*.)

When the only evil remaining within a person is of such a subtle nature, it can only surface in very superficial, unpremeditated behavior. The archetype of such behavior is gossip, which often takes the form of a casual remark that slips through otherwise innocuous conversation. Speech is indeed a superficial activity, and it is therefore relatively easy to control—this being the reason why it is one of the first aspects of our lives that we are bidden to refine.⁴³ But it is also an expression of the soul, and therefore, unrehearsed speech can at times betray the inner recesses of the heart.

For these reasons, *tzara'at* afflicts in particular people who are guilty of nothing else but gossip, and it appears on the superficial elements of their lives: their skin, their clothing, and their houses. These entities are three increasingly external layers that envelop us: our skin is our innermost layer of “clothing,” tailored perfectly to our bodies; next come our actual clothes, also cut to fit our bodies but not as precisely as our skin; and finally, our homes, into which we “fit,” conducting our essential life-activities within them, but which are the least-precisely tailored to us physically.

Tzara'at first affects the outermost “garment,” the house, because at first, gossip is entirely superficial. If the individual does not take this cue and neglects to purge himself of his inner, residual evil,

tzara'at breaks out on his clothing, indicating that his unrestrained gossip has given the deep-seated evil it expresses the chance to seep into him from the outside, so to speak, so that his behavior is less superficial than it was originally. If he ignores this cue as well, *tzara'at* breaks out on his skin, indicating that this evil, although still superficial, is now part of him. At this stage, he must be ostracized from society, and hopefully this demonstration of the consequences of his behavior will inspire him to mend his ways.

Since *tzara'at* is intended to cure the individual of his hidden evil, the diagnostic and purification rituals must be overseen by a priest. The priest is the earthly embodiment of God’s infinite loving-kindness, which alone is able to uproot and weed out this otherwise inaccessible evil. Furthermore, it is specifically the priest’s speech that frees the sufferer from his defilement, for in order to counteract the expression of the sufferer’s inner evil via his unrecited speech, the priest must employ his power of holy speech to elicit the inner goodness of God’s infinite loving-kindness.⁴⁴

For only they are authorized to pronounce someone or something defiled: It is important to note that until the priest pronounces an individual defiled, he is not considered to be so, even if he exhibits all the indicative symptoms. Thus, before the pronouncement of the priest, these symptoms do not reflect defilement; indeed, very similar symptoms—and in some cases, even more serious ones—can indicate freedom from defilement.

Significantly, the principal color of the lesions that

— A CLOSER LOOK —

[3] See Figure 2: The flowcharts in this *parashah* and the next one depict the diagnostic processes for the various forms of *tzara'at* according to the contextual meaning of the Torah. The actual di-

agnostic processes derived through halachic exegesis, as detailed in the Mishnah⁴⁵ and the Codes of Law,⁴⁶ are somewhat more complex, and in some details, different.

43. Introduction to *Pokeiach Ivrim*, pp. 9-12. 44. *Likutei Torah* 2:22b; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 65-69, 74-75. 45. Chiefly in the tractate *Negaim*. 46. Chiefly in *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at*.

3 *Tzara'at* can develop out of any of these four types of white spots. There are three signs that indicate that a white lesion has developed into *tzara'at*: white hairs, healthy flesh,³⁵ and spreading (see Figure 2, page 97). The rules regarding white hairs are as follows: **The priest must examine the lesion on the skin of his flesh, and if two or more originally dark hairs within the lesion have turned white since the appearance of the lesion³⁶—whether the appearance of the lesion, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, is deeper than that of the unaffected skin of his flesh (due to its shininess), even though the spot is not actually deeper than the skin, or, in the case of the wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, the appearance of the lesion is not deeper than that of the skin (due to its dullness)³⁷—it is a lesion of *tzara'at*. When the priest sees this, he must pronounce him ritually defiled.**

The practical ramifications of the ritual defilement contracted on account of *tzara'at* are the same as those for the ritual defilement contracted by a man who has suffered two or more discrete non-seminal discharges,³⁸ which will be discussed in detail later.³⁹

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

an altogether righteous person, who no longer has to wrestle with evil. Such a person's life-challenge is now to constantly ascend to ever higher levels of Divine consciousness and to inspire others to emulate his example.

On the other hand, after the individual has exhaust-

ed all these tools, some subtle evil might still remain, lurking so deep within the individual that he might never become aware of it on his own. When this is the case, God signals him to this effect by afflicting him with *tzara'at*.

(It is therefore understood why *tzara'at* no lon-

✧ INNER DIMENSIONS ✧

[continued...] as an elixir of life; if he does not, it acts as an elixir of death."⁴⁰ The word for "merit" (זכה) also means "to be refined," intimating that the "merit" that determines whether the study of the Torah betters or debilitates the student is his degree of spiritual refinement, i.e., lack of ego.

This amplified sense of self intoxicates us with overconfidence, which, unless checked, will corrupt us in many ways. It can delude us into thinking that we can safely lower our guard against the enticements of materialism; it can render us overly judgmental of others (hence the increased propensity toward gossip or slander); it can exaggerate our self-estimation, thereby leading us to depression when we fail to live up to our unrealistic expectations for ourselves, and so on. Whatever the case, the forces of evil siphon off Divine energy from this unbalanced *binah*.

This added opportunity for the forces of evil to

insinuate themselves into our lives is reflected physically in the growth of white hair within the lesion. As we will see later,⁴¹ hair represents a highly attenuated flow of Divine energy—so attenuated that the forces of evil are allowed to tap it. For this reason, hair must normally be kept short, in order to prevent the forces of evil from siphoning off more than the minimal Divine energy that they are allocated for their continued existence.

In order to restore the flow of *chochmah* to *binah*, the individual must be presented to a priest, who represents *chesed*, which is derived from *chochmah* (both *sefirot* being on the right axis of the sefirotic tree). The priest then quarantines him for seven days, in order to allow the seven lower sub-*sefirot* of *chochmah* to re-enter *binah* (for it is always the seven lower sub-*sefirot* of a higher *partzuf* that become vested within a lower *partzuf*), imparting to it its inherent sense of self-nullification before God.⁴²

35. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:6. 36. *Ibid.*, 2:6. 37. *Gur Aryeh* on v. 4, below; *Kesef Mishneh* on *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:6. 38. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 10:11-12. 39. *Ibid.*, 15:4-12. 40. *Yoma* 72b. 41. On Numbers 6:5. 42. *Likutei Torah* 2:23b, 24a, 24c ff; *BeSha'ah sheHikdimu* 5672, vol. 1, p. 370; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5714-5716, p. 511.

— ONKELOS —

4 ואם בהרא חזרא היא במשך
בסרה ועמיק לית מחזקא מן
משכא ושערה לא אתהפוך
למחור ויסגר כהנא ית מכתשא
שבעא יומין: 5 ויחונה כהנא
ביומא שביעאה והא מכתשא
קם כד הוה לא אוסף מכתשא
במשכא ויסגרנה כהנא שבעא
יומין תניגות:

4 וְאִם-בְּהֵרָתָּ לְכַנֵּה הוּא בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ וְעַמֵּק אֵינִי-מְרַאֶה
מִזֶּה-עוֹר וְשַׁעְרָה לְאִתְּהֵפֵךְ לָבֶן וְהַסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַנֶּגַע
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: 5 וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהֵנִיחַ הַנֶּגַע
עַמֵּד בְּעֵינָיו לְאִתְּפֹשֶׁה הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְהַסְגִּירוֹ הַכֹּהֵן שִׁבְעַת
יָמִים שְׁנִית:

— RASHI —

עליו: 5 בעיניו. במראהו ובשעורו הראשון: והסגירו
שנית. הא אם פשה בשבוע ראשון, טמא מקלט:

4 ועמק אין מראה. לא ידעתי פרושו: והסגיר. יסגירונו
בבית אחד, ולא יראה עד סוף השבוע, ויוכיחו סימנים

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

sitating the demolition of his house, the burning of his clothes, or his banishment from the community until he repents.

In this context, the sin of gossip for which *tzara'at* is the corrective punishment can be seen to be a superfluity of what could have (and should have) been good—or even holy—but instead degenerated into the opposite: We are all acutely aware of how powerful our speech is in forging social ties and promoting peace, and whether we are conscious of it or not, this is why we relish social conversation, clarifying issues with each other until we reach mutual understanding. When, however, a hidden drop of residual haughtiness insists that our reputation or esteem take precedence over the advancement of social harmony, some gossip or slander is inadvertently released in the heady excitement of conversation.

This explains why the Messiah is referred to as being afflicted with *tzara'at*.⁶² The messianic Redemption, the ultimate exodus from Egypt, will be characterized by a complete release from all limitations that nowadays constrict the revelation of holiness and Divine consciousness, similar to the overabundance of holiness manifest in the symptoms of *tzara'at*.⁶³

For only they are authorized to pronounce someone or something defiled: As we just pointed out, it is the priest's pronouncement—rather than the appearance of qualifying symptoms per se—that render the person ritually defiled. This fact puts considerable onus on the priest, especially in light of the consequences of his pronouncement: the ritually defiled individual must be banished from society, even from the company of other ritually defiled people. This total ostracism is not required in the case of any other type of defilement.

The Torah therefore specifically requires a priest to

make this pronouncement. The priests are all descendants (and therefore spiritual heirs) of Aaron, whom we have seen⁶⁴ (and will see further⁶⁵) both embodied the ideal of brotherly love and promoted brotherly love among the people. God therefore refers to the priests as His men of loving-kindness⁶⁶ and grants them the privilege of blessing His people daily.⁶⁷ Moreover, the blessing tradition requires them to recite before pronouncing this blessing is “Blessed are You, God, our God, He who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron and commanded us to bless His people, Israel, *with love*.”⁶⁸

Imbued with this love for their compatriots, the priests—while remaining objectively true to the Torah's directives for determining if a given outbreak of symptoms renders the sufferer defiled or not—will make all efforts to ensure that the law indeed requires them to pronounce the sufferer defiled before doing so. Furthermore, their inherent love for their fellows will compel them to do whatever it takes to declare them undefiled at the earliest possible opportunity.

The lesson for us here is that when we encounter someone whose behavior makes us judge him to be unfit to be included with us or befriended by us, we should not rush to declare him so. Rather, we should first examine ourselves in order to determine how well we exemplify the ideals of brotherly love. If we are in any way lacking in this regard—if we are not a “priest, a descendant of Aaron”—we have no right to pass such judgment, for it could well be that our perception is skewed by our unrefined sentiments rather than grounded solidly in the objective laws of the Torah.

Moreover, anyone who is less than a “priest”—an embodiment of brotherly love—is not qualified to ostracize another Jew, and if he presumes to do so, his pronouncement is no less than an outright

62. See Overview to *parashat Metzora*. 63. *Likutei Torah* 2:22b, 25b; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 37, pp. 33-36; *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 2, pp. 492-494. 64. On 9:1, 10:16, and 11:2-3, above. 65. Numbers 20:29; on Deuteronomy 34:8. 66. Deuteronomy 33:8. 67. Numbers 6:23-27; Deuteronomy 10:8, 28:5. 68. *Sotah* 39a.

4 These are the rules regarding spreading: **If the lesion on the skin of his flesh is a snow-white or lime-white spot**, whose appearance is deeper than that of the unaffected skin, or a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, **whose appearance is not deeper than that of the unaffected skin, but no previously dark hairs have turned white** since the appearance of the lesion and there is no patch of healthy skin within the lesion (as will be described presently⁴⁷), then **the priest must quarantine the person with the lesion in a separate house for seven days**, during which the priest must not see him, in order that the priest be able afterward to discern whether the lesion has spread during this time.⁴⁸

The quarantined individual is considered ritually defiled to the same extent as someone who has been conclusively diagnosed as afflicted with *tzara'at*.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, he is not to be banished from the camp (or later, after we will be organized into three concentric camps,⁵⁰ from all three camps), as is someone who has been conclusively diagnosed, as will be discussed later.⁵¹

5 On the seventh day, the priest must examine him. If (a) the lesion has remained the same in its appearance, i.e., color, and (b) the lesion has not grown and spread on the skin, and (c) no previously dark hairs within it have turned white, and⁵² (d) no patch of healthy flesh has appeared within it (as will be described presently), the priest must quarantine him for seven days a second time. If, however, the lesion spread, covering more (but not all⁵³) of his body; or previously dark hairs within it turned white; or a patch of healthy flesh appeared within it; the priest must pronounce him defiled.⁵⁴ In contrast, if the lesion either shrunk⁵⁵ or became darker⁵⁶ to the extent that it no longer qualifies as one of the four types of white spots mentioned above, the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement and he must undergo the purification process that will be detailed later.⁵⁷

The seventh day of the first quarantine week also counts as the first day of the second quarantine week.⁵⁸

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indicate a possible outbreak of *tzara'at* is white, which is a symbol of purity and innocence.⁵⁹ This indicates that the appearance of the symptoms of *tzara'at* is in fact a manifestation of sublime levels of spiritual energy ("lights"). Whenever such sublime "lights" well up, overflowing their accompanying media of transmission ("vessels"), the result is a supra-natural manifestation of Divine energy, which must be managed carefully in order to avoid possibly detrimental repercussions.

In terms of human experience, the symptoms of *tzara'at* result from an upwelling of holy rapture (*ratzo*) that is not mitigated by a concomitant sense of humble devotion to our Divine mission (*shov*). We have seen this phenomenon before, in the un-

authorized incense offering of Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu,⁶⁰ which is possibly why the Torah discusses the laws of *tzara'at* immediately after the account of their offering, even before continuing with its narrative of the events of that day.⁶¹

If the individual upon whose body, clothes, or house the symptoms of *tzara'at* appear does properly manage his Divine rapture, taking care to balance it with humble devotion to God's will, he will not be pronounced defiled; his symptoms are indications of exceptional holiness rather than of defilement. Only if he persists in his "antisocial" behavior of preferring to bask in God's presence rather than elevating the world in order to make it into God's home is he pronounced defiled, neces-

47. Vv. 10-16. 48. *Da'at Zekeinim* (Ba'alei HaTosefot) on this verse. 49. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 10:7-12. 50. Numbers 1:51-2:34; see also Deuteronomy 12:5-18. 51. V. 46. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 18, p. 135, note 31. 52. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:10-11. 53. Below, vv. 12-13. 54. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:5. 55. *Ibid.*, 3:5. 56. *Ibid.*, 1:11. 57. 14:1-32. 58. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 9:9. 59. See Isaiah 1:18. 60. Above, 10:1-7, and comments *ad loc.* 61. See 16:1, below.

ONKELOS

6 וַיִּחַזֵּי כִּהְנָא יְתֵהּ בְיוֹמָא שְׁבִיעָאָה תְּנִינִית וְהָא עֲמָא מִכְתָּשָׂא וְלֹא אוֹסֵף מִכְתָּשָׂא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וַיִּדְבַּק כִּהְנָא עֲדִיתָא הִיא וַיִּצְבַּע לְבוּשׁוֹהִי וַיִּדְבֵּי: 7 וְאִם אוֹסֵף תוֹסֵף עֲדִיתָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא בְּתֵר דְּאִתְחַזִּי לְכִהְנָא לְרִכּוּתָהּ וַיִּתְחַזִּי תְּנִינִית לְכִהְנָא: 8 וַיִּחַזֵּי כִּהְנָא וְהָא אוֹסֵיפֵת עֲדִיתָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וַיִּסְאֲבִנָה כִּהְנָא סְגִירוּתָא הִיא: 9 מִכְתָּשׁ סְגִירוּ אַרְי תְּהִי בְּאִנְשָׁא וַיִּתִּיתִי לוֹת כִּהְנָא: 10 וַיִּחַזֵּי כִּהְנָא וְהָא עֲמָקָא הִירָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וְהִיא הִפְכַת שַׁעַר לְמַחֲוֹר וְרִשָּׁם בְּשָׂרָא הִיא בְּעַמִּיקְתָּא: 11 סְגִירוּת עֲתִיקָא הִיא בְּמִשְׁךְ בִּסְרָה וַיִּסְאֲבִנָה כִּהְנָא לֹא יִסְגְּרָנָה אַרְי מְסָבָּה הוּא: 12 וְאִם מְסָבָּא תְּסִגִּי סְגִירוּתָא בְּמִשְׁכָּא וְתַחְפִּי סְגִירוּתָא יֵת כֹּל מִשְׁךְ מִכְתָּשָׂא וְתַחְפִּי מְרִישָׁה וְעַד רְגִלוֹהִי לְכָל חֻזֵּי כִּהְנָא:

שני 6 וּרְאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֹתוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שְ�נִית וְהִנֵּה בְּהָהּ הַנֶּנֶע וְלֹא־פָשָׁה הַנֶּנֶע בְּעוֹר וּמְהֵרוּ הַכֹּהֵן מִסִּפְחַת הוּא וְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וּמְהֵרָ: 7 וְאִם־פָּשָׁה תִּפְשָׁה הַמִּסִּפְחַת בְּעוֹר אַחֲרֵי הִרְאָתוֹ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן לְמַהֲרָתוֹ וְנִרְאָה שְׁנִית אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 8 וּרְאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה פָּשְׁתָה הַמִּסִּפְחַת בְּעוֹר וּטְמֵאוֹ הַכֹּהֵן צָרַעַת הוּא: פ

9 נֶנֶע צָרַעַת כִּי תִהְיֶה בְּאָדָם וְהוּבֵא אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 10 וּרְאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה שְׂאֵת־לְבָנָה בְּעוֹר וְהִיא הַפֶּכֶה שַׁעַר לְבָן וּמַחֲיֵת בְּשָׂר הִי בִשְׂאֵת: 11 צָרַעַת נוֹשֶׁנֶת הוּא בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ וּטְמֵאוֹ הַכֹּהֵן לֹא יִסְגְּרָנּוּ כִּי טְמֵא הוּא: 12 וְאִם־פָּרוּחַ תִּפְרַח הַצָּרַעַת בְּעוֹר וְכִסְתָּהּ הַצָּרַעַת אֶת כָּל־עוֹר הַנֶּנֶע מִרְאֵשׁוֹ וְעַד־רַגְלָיו לְכָל־מְרִאָה עֵינֵי הַכֹּהֵן:

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בְּשָׂר, אִף הוּא סִימָן טְמֵאָה, שַׁעַר לְבָן בְּלֹא מַחֲוִיה וּמַחֲוִיה בְּלֹא שַׁעַר לְבָן. וְאִף עַל פִּי שְׂלֵא נֶאֱמַרְה מַחֲוִיה אֶלְא בִשְׂאֵת, אִף בְּכָל הַמְרִאוֹת וְתוֹלְדוֹתֵיהֶן הוּא סִימָן טְמֵאָה: 11 צָרַעַת נוֹשֶׁנֶת הִיא. מִכָּה יִשְׁנָה הִיא תַּחַת הַמַּחֲוִיה, וְתַבּוּרָה זֹו נִרְאִית בְּרִיאָה מְלַמְעָלָה, וְתַחְתִּיהָ מְלֵאָה לְחָה, שְׂלֵא תֵאמַר: הוּאִיל וְעֵלְתָה מַחֲוִיה — אֶטְהַרְנָה: 12 מְרִאֵשׁוֹ. שֵׁל אָדָם וְעַד רַגְלָיו: לְכָל מְרִאָה עֵינֵי הַכֹּהֵן. פֶּרֶט לְכֹהֵן שֶׁחֲשָׁף מְאוּרוֹ:

6 כִּהְנָה. הִכָּהָה מְרִאֵתוֹ. הָא, אִם עֲמַד בְּמְרִאֵתוֹ, אוֹ פָּשָׁה — טְמֵא: מִסִּפְחַת. שֵׁם נֶנֶע טְהוֹר: וְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וּמְהֵרָ. הוּאִיל וְנִזְקַק לְהַסְגֵר, נִקְרָא טְמֵא וְצִרִיף טְבִילָה: 8 וּטְמֵאוֹ הַכֹּהֵן. וּמִשְׁטָמְאוֹ הִרִי הוּא מְחֻלָּט, וְזִקְוֹק לְצַפְרִים וּלְתַגְלִחַת וּלְקַרְבֵן הָאֲמוֹר בְּפָרֶשֶׁת "זֹאת תִּהְיֶה": צָרַעַת הוּא. הַמִּסִּפְחַת הַזֹּאת: צָרַעַת. לְשׁוֹן נִקְבָה. "נֶנֶע" — לְשׁוֹן זָכַר: 10 וּמַחֲוִית. שֵׁינִימִינִ"ט בְּלַעֲזִי, שְׁנֵהֶפֶךְ מִקְצַת הַלְבָן שֶׁבְתוֹף הַשְּׂאֵת לְמְרִאָה

7. החלמה, רפוי.

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lie, for as stated, it is only the pronouncement of the priest that renders the individual defiled (and therefore subject to exclusion from society), not the symptoms themselves.

It thus follows that someone who utters such an unauthorized judgment has slandered his fellow, which, as we have seen,⁸⁰ results in *him* being afflicted with *tzara'at*, rather than the person he sought to stigmatize. Therefore, in order to purify himself

of this defilement, the judgmental person should isolate himself from social contact until he trains himself to see only the positive in his compatriots.

By learning how to love our fellows "unwarrantedly"—i.e., positively, regardless of their objective behavior—we counteract the cause of our present exile, unwarranted hatred. Thereby, we hasten the advent of the final, messianic Redemption.⁸¹

A CLOSER LOOK

[10] **The size of a lentil bean:** This area is equated with the average square area covered by 4 hairs (2 hairs by 2 hairs) as they grow naturally

on the body.⁸² The modern-day equivalent is 17.11 mm² or 0.026 in².

80. Above, v. 2. See also "Inner Dimensions" on 14:2, below. 81. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 88-91. 82. *Negaim* 4:5; *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 3:1.

◆ **Second Reading 6** After his second quarantine-week, **the priest must examine him on the seventh** (i.e., 13th) **day a second time**. If the lesion's color has not become darker; or it has spread, covering more (but not all⁶⁹) of his body; or previously dark hairs within it have turned white; or a patch of healthy flesh has appeared within it; it is *tzara'at*, and the priest must pronounce him defiled. If, however, no previously dark hairs have turned white, no patch of healthy flesh has appeared, **the lesion has become darker** than it was before this quarantine—even though it has not darkened to the extent that it no longer exhibits one of the four degrees of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*⁷⁰—**and the lesion has not spread on the skin, the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement**, for it is now clear that this lesion is not a case of *tzara'at*: **it has become a different condition**, termed *mispachat*, which does not cause defilement; no third quarantine period is needed.⁷¹ **He must immerse** himself⁷² and **his garments** in a *mikveh* and undergo the rest of the purification process that will be described later,⁷³ **and then he will be rid of this defilement** in fact.

7 If the *mispachat* spreads on the skin sometime after the person was shown to the priest for his purification on the 13th day, **he must be shown to the priest again**.

8 The priest must examine the *mispachat*. If the *mispachat* has spread on the skin since the previous examination, **the priest must pronounce him defiled**, for it is no longer *mispachat*; **it has turned into *tzara'at***.

9 The following are the rules⁷⁴ regarding the third indication of *tzara'at*, the appearance of healthy flesh within the lesion: As was stated previously,⁷⁵ **if a person has a white lesion** that appears to be *tzara'at*, due to its falling into one of the four categories of whiteness mentioned above, **he must be brought to the priest**.

10 The priest must examine it. If there is on the skin a wool-white spot or any of the other three types of white lesions that can develop into *tzara'at*, **and either** (a), as stated previously,⁷⁶ **it has turned** at least two of the formerly dark hairs within it **white, or** (b) there is in the wool-white spot (or other type of lesion) a contiguous⁷⁷ patch of **healthy, live flesh** at least the size of a lentil bean and enclosed completely within the lesion,⁷⁸ then,

11 in the case of the appearance of healthy flesh, you should not be deceived into thinking that this is a sign that the *tzara'at* is healing; rather, **it is a case of old, purulent *tzara'at* remaining under the new, healthy skin of his flesh**. Both in this case and in the case of newly white hairs, **the priest must pronounce him defiled. He need not quarantine him, because he is definitely defiled**.

12 As we have seen, the spreading of a lesion indicates that it is *tzara'at*. If, however, **the *tzara'at* erupts all over the skin** to the extent **that the *tzara'at* covers all the skin of the person with the lesion, from his head to his feet, wherever the eyes of the priest can see it**—meaning that the *tzara'at* need not appear on interior skin (such as that inside the nose or mouth) that is not readily visible during an external examination⁷⁹—then

69. Below, vv. 12-13. 70. Nachmanides on this verse; Mizrahi on the preceding verse; Rabbeinu Asher and Rabbeinu Shimshon of Sens on *Negaim* 1:3. 71. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:10. 72. *Ibid.*, 11:1. 73. 14:1-32. 74. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 77-81. 75. V. 2. 76. V. 3. 77. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 3:4. 78. *Ibid.*, 3:1. 79. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 84-85.

ONKELOS 13 וַיַּחֲזִי כִּהְנָא וְהָא חַפְתּוֹתָא סְגִירוֹתָא ית כל בסרה וידכי ית מכתשא כלה אתהפיך למחור דכי הוא: 14 וביומא דיתחוי בה בסרא היא יחי מסאב: 15 ויחוי כהנא ית בסרא היא ויסאבנה בסרא היא מסאב הוא סגירותא הוא: 16 או ארי יתוב בסרא היא ויתהפיך למחור וייתי לות כהנא: 17 ויחונה כהנא והא אתהפיך מכתשא למחור וידכי כהנא ית מכתשא דכי הוא: 18 ואגש ארי יחי בה במשבה שחנא ואתסי:

13 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה כִּסְתָהּ הַצְרַעַת אֶת־כָּל־בְּשָׂרוֹ וְטָהַר אֶת־הַנֶּגַע כָּלּוֹ הַפֶּה לָבֵן טָהוֹר הוּא: 14 וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן בּוֹ בֶּשֶׂר חַי וְטָמֵא: 15 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַבֶּשֶׂר הַחַי וְטָמֵאֹ הַבֶּשֶׂר הַחַי טָמֵא הוּא צִרְעַת הוּא: 16 אֹ כִי יָשׁוּב הַבֶּשֶׂר הַחַי וְנִהְפֶּה לְלָבָן וְכֹא אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 17 וְרָאָהּ הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה נִהְפֶּה הַנֶּגַע לְלָבָן וְטָהַר אֶת־הַנֶּגַע טָהוֹר הוּא: פ

שלישי 18 וּבֶשֶׂר כִּי־יִהְיֶה בּוֹ־בְעָרוֹ שְׁחִין וְנִרְפָּא:

RASHI 18

בו, ויש יום שאין אתה רואה בו. מכאן אמרו: חתן נותנין לו כל שבעת ימי המשתה, לו ולאצטליתו ולכסותו ולביתו, וכן ברגל, נותנין לו כל ימי הרגל: 15 צרעת הוא. הבשר ההוא. "בשר" לשון זכר: 18 שחין. לשון חמום, שנתחמם הבשר בלקוי הבא לו מחמת מכה, שלא מחמת האור: ונרפא. השחין העלה ארוכה, ובמקומו עלה נגע אחר:

14 וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן בּוֹ בֶּשֶׂר חַי. אם צמחה בו מחיה, הרי כבר פרח שהמחיה סימן טמאה? אלא, הרי שהיה הנגע באחד מעשרים וארבעה ראשי אברים שאין מטמאין משום מחיה, לפי שאין נראה הנגע כלו באחד, ששופע אילף ואילף, וחור ראש האבר ונתגלה שפועו על ידי שמן, כגון שהבריא ונעשה רחב ונראית בו המחיה, למדנו הכתוב שתטמא: וּבַיּוֹם. מה תלמוד לומר? ללמד, יש יום שאתה רואה

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sake, as it were, fulfilling the verse, "For My own sake, for My own sake I will do this, for how can I let My Name be profaned?"⁹⁰

- Positively, i.e., that the truth of the Torah will become so self-evident that it will be universally acknowledged that any government that does not submit to the Torah's rules is "heretical," i.e., based on the delusion that it is possible to create a just and moral society any other way. Accordingly, the Jewish people will be esteemed as the preservers of the Torah's message of true monotheism. In this enlightened condition, the Messiah's imminent arrival will be a natural outgrowth of the world's desire for moral perfection. God will not have to "impose" the redemption on the world.

Inasmuch as the sages cite the law given in this verse as support for their sign, it follows that the two ways of understanding their sign parallel the two ways of understanding this law, namely:

- Negatively: The spread of *tzara'at* over the entire body does not intrinsically indicate that the person is undefiled; the fact that it does so is simply another one of the Torah's rules that are not grounded in logic or reason, just like the rest of

the laws governing *tzara'at*. The Torah here "imposes" its will on reality, irrespective of natural causes or processes.

This, indeed, is the position adopted by Jewish legal (i.e., halachic) exegesis, which therefore limits this rule to the case stated specifically in this verse: when *tzara'at* spreads out from a lesion that had been pronounced defiled or suspected of being so. In contrast, when *tzara'at* spreads over the entire body from the outset or from a lesion that was pronounced undefiled, the person must be declared defiled.⁹¹

- Positively: The spread of *tzara'at* over the entire body indicates that it is the natural condition of the person's skin; this is why it does not render the person defiled. This is the position that Rashi adopts as the contextual understanding of this passage, according to which it makes no difference under what circumstances the spread occurs—in all cases it indicates that the person is undefiled.

Clearly, it is preferable that redemption occur the second way, obviating the need for universal moral degeneration and the forceful imposition of God's will on an antagonistic world. The Torah therefore promises that prior to the Redemption, the Jewish

90. Isaiah 48:11; see *Sanhedrin* 98a. 91. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at*, ch. 7.

13 the priest must examine it. If the *tzara'at* has indeed covered all his flesh, he must pronounce the person with the lesion rid of this defilement. The fact that **he has turned completely white** indicates that this lesion is not an anomaly but the natural condition of his body; therefore, **he is not defiled.**⁸³

14 Returning to the laws regarding healthy flesh that appears within a *tzara'at*-lesion: It was stated previously that the appearance of such a patch renders the individual defiled.⁸⁴ The exception is a patch of healthy flesh that appears on the tip of a finger, toe, ear lobe, the nose, or the male reproductive organ. Such a patch does not render the person defiled, because it is impossible for the priest to see both sides of these body parts at once, and therefore he cannot see the entire lesion at once in order to render a decision on it. If, however, the body part later becomes fat, thereby spreading out the tip of the limb such that it is possible to see the entire lesion (and the entire patch of healthy flesh on it) at once, then, **on the day that a patch of live flesh at least the size of a lentil bean⁸⁵ appears in it, he will become defiled.**

15 Therefore, he must be shown to the priest, and **the priest must examine the healthy, live flesh, and must pronounce him defiled.** The appearance of live flesh indicates that the person is defiled; the lesion is *tzara'at*.

16 But if the healthy, live flesh once again turns white, he must come to the priest 17 and the priest must reexamine him. If the lesion has indeed turned totally white again, the priest must pronounce the lesion undefiled. The person will thus be rid of this defilement.

Tzara'at that Develops out of an Inflammation

- ◆ **Third Reading 18** If *tzara'at* develops out of a partially healed inflammation, the rules of diagnosis differ slightly from those that apply when it develops out of a white spot (see Figure 3, page 97), as follows:

This type of *tzara'at* can only develop **on a person's flesh if there is an inflammation** (i.e., a localized heating resulting from the infection) **of its skin** due to a blow or disease,⁸⁶ **and the inflammation heals** enough to form a membrane. (In contrast, a fully healed inflammation is considered normal skin—even if it leaves scar tissue⁸⁷—on which *tzara'at* can only develop out of a white lesion,⁸⁸ as described above.)

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13 If the *tzara'at* has covered all his flesh: One of the signs given by the sages that the Messiah's arrival is imminent is that "the entire government has become heretical, with none to rebuke them." This notion, they say, is alluded to in the law that if *tzara'at* covers the entire body, the person is undefiled.⁸⁹ There are two ways of understanding this sign given by the sages:

- Negatively, i.e., that heresy will infect all the world's governments. None of them will acknowledge God as Master of the world and its lawgiver, promoting instead licentiousness and barbaric behavior. In this entrenched, depraved condition, the Messiah is the world's only hope; it is therefore a sign of his imminent arrival. But since the world will not be worthy of redemption, God will redeem it "by force"—for His own

83. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 77-81. 84. Vv. 9-11, above. 85. Above, v. 10. 86. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 5:1. 87. *Ibid.*, 5:3-4. 88. *Ibid.*, 5:3. 89. *Sanhedrin* 97a.

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 19 יהי באתר שחנא עמקא חורא או בהרא חורא סמקא ויתחזי לכהנא: 20 ויחזי כהנא והא מחזקא מכיר מן משכא ושערה אתהפיך למחור ויסאבגה פהנא מכתש סגירותא היא בשחנא סגיאת: 21 ואם יחונה כהנא והא לית בה שער חור ומביכא ליתקא מן משכא והיא עמיא ויסגרנה כהנא שבעא יומי: 22 ואם אוספא תוסף במשכא ויסאב כהנא ותה מכתשא היא: 23 ואם באתרהא קמת בהרתא לא אוסיפת רשם שחנא היא וידכנה פהנא: 24 או אנש ארי יהי במשכה כנאה דנור ותהי רשם כנאה בהרא חורא סמקא או חורא:

19 והיה במקום השחין שאת לבנה או בהרת לבנה אדמדמת ונראה אלהפכו: 20 וראה הכהן והנה מראה שפל מן העור ושערה הפך לבן וממאו הכהן נגע צרעת הוא בשחין פרחו: 21 ואם יראנה הכהן והנה אין בה שער לבן ושפלה איננה מן העור והיא כהה והסגירו הכהן שבעת ימים: 22 ואם פשה תפשה בעור וממא הכהן אתו נגע הוא: 23 ואם תחיתה תעמוד בהרת לא פשתה צרבת השחין הוא וטהרו הכהן: 8 רביעי (שני במחוברין) 24 או בשר בייהיה בערו מכות אש והיתה מחית המכה בהרת לבנה אדמדמת או לבנה:

— RASHI —

לשון רגיעת עור הנרגע מחמת חמום, כמו: "ונצרב בך כל פנים". ריטריר"א בלעז: צרבת. ריטריימינ"ט בלעז: 24 מחית המכה. שיינימינ"ט בלעז. כשחיתה המכה, נהפכה לבהרת פתוכה, או לבנה חלקה. וסימני מכה וסימני שחין שוים הם, ולמה חלקן הכתוב? לומר, שאין מצטרפין זה עם זה — נולד חצי גריס בשחין וחצי גריס במכה, לא ידונו כגריס:

19 או בהרת לבנה אדמדמת. שאין הנגע לבן חלק, אלא פתוף ומערב בשני מראות, לבן ואדם: 20 מראה שפל. ואין ממשושה שפל, אלא מתוף לבנינותו הוא נראה שפל ועמק, כמראה חמה עמקה מן הצל: 22 נגע הוא. השאת הזאת או הבהרת: 23 תחיתה. במקומה: צרבת השחין. כתרגומו: "רשם שחנא" — אינו אלא רשם החמום הנפר בבשר. כל "צרבת"

8. מועד קטן ז, ב. 9. יחזקאל כא, ג. 10. לכנץ. 11. כוץ. 12. החלמה, רפוי.

a snow-white spot or one of the three other types of white spots that can develop into *tzara'at*, and the spot is either white with red streaks—but not so many red streaks that the spot loses its white appearance¹⁰⁰—or uniformly white,

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people will indeed repent fully, of their own accord, and on their own initiative, thereby ushering in the Redemption.¹⁰¹ This repentance need not be evinced by a wholesale return to full Jewish observance, for that revival will be one of the Messiah's first accomplishments.¹⁰² Rather, this repentance consists of the sincere dissatisfaction with the present state of reality—accompanied by the resolution to change it—that we have all experienced numerous times throughout our lives.¹⁰³

It is therefore imperative that the Jewish people encourage the nations of the world to fulfill the commandments that the Torah obligates them to observe. By acknowledging the Torah as the sole possible basis for true ethical behavior and moral justice, the non-Jewish world will appreciate the Jewish people as the vanguards of world justice, morality, and peace. This will pave the way for the ultimate, messianic Redemption.¹⁰⁴

100. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:4. 101. Deuteronomy 30:2; *Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah* 7:5; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 215-216. 102. *Mishneh Torah, Melachim* 11:4. 103. *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 1, p. 232, vol. 2, p. 692; *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 2, p. 451. 104. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 77-83.

19 If, in the location of the partially healed inflammation, there is left one of the four white spots that can develop into *tzara'at*, i.e., either a **wool-white spot**, an egg-membrane-white-spot, a **snow-white spot**, or a lime-white spot, and the spot is either uniformly white or white **with red streaks**—but not so many red streaks that the spot loses its white appearance⁹²—**he must be shown to the priest.**⁹³

20 **The priest must examine him. If its appearance is**, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, **lower than** that of the skin (due to its shininess), or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, not any lower than that of the skin (due to its dullness), **and at least two of its originally dark hairs have turned white, the priest must pronounce him defiled**, for the transmutation of dark hairs into white indicates that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion that has erupted on the inflammation.

21 **But if**, when the priest examines it, **it does not contain newly white hair**, and its appearance is, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, lower than that of the skin, or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, **not any lower than** that of the skin because **it is darker** than a snow-white or lime-white spot, **the priest must quarantine him for seven days.**

22 **If**, when the priest examines him at the end of the quarantine week, he sees that **it has spread on the skin**—covering more (but not all) of the body—or at least two of its previously dark hairs have turned white, **the priest must pronounce him defiled**, for it is now clear that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion.

23 **If the snow-white spot** or other spot **remained the same size, not having spread**, and it became darker than it was before⁹⁴ (even though it has not darkened to the extent that it no longer exhibits one of the four degrees of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*⁹⁵), **it is only the scar tissue of the inflammation, and the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement.** No second week of quarantine is required.

Unlike lesions that develop on healthy skin, the appearance of healthy flesh within a lesion that develops on an inflammation does not indicate defilement.

Tzara'at that Develops out of a Burn

- ◆ *Fourth Reading (Second when combined)* 24 If *tzara'at* develops out of a partially healed burn, the rules of diagnosis are the same as when it develops out of an inflammation (see Figure 3, page 97):

This type of *tzara'at* can only develop on a person's **flesh if there is a burn on its skin** resulting from contact with **fire** or something hot,⁹⁶ **and the healed area of the burn** has begun to form a membrane. (In contrast, a fully healed burn is considered normal skin—even if it leaves scar tissue⁹⁷—on which *tzara'at* can only develop out of a white lesion,⁹⁸ as described above.⁹⁹) If such a partially healed burn turns into

92. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 1:4. 93. Vv. 1-17. 94. Below, v. 28. 95. Nachmanides v. 6, above; Mizrahi on v. 5, above; Rabbeinu Asher and Rabbeinu Shimshon of Sens on *Negaim* 1:3. 96. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 5:1. 97. *Ibid.*, 5:3-4. 98. *Ibid.*, 5:3. 99. Vv. 1-17.

— ONKELOS —
 25 וַיִּחַזֵּי יְתֵה כְּהֵנָּא וְהָא אַתְּהִפִּיף שְׁעָרָא לְמַחֲוֹר בְּבִהְרֵתָא וּמְחַזְהָא עֵמִיק מִן מִשְׁכָּא סְגִירוּתָא הִיא בְּכוּזָה סְגִיאת וְיִסְאֵב יְתֵה כְּהֵנָּא מִכְתֵּשׁ סְגִירוּתָא הִיא: 26 וְאִם יִחְזוּנָה כְּהֵנָּא וְהָא לִית בְּבִהְרֵתָא שְׁעָר חֲוֹר וּמִכְיָא לִיתֵהָ מִן מִשְׁכָּא וְהִיא עֵמִיא וְיִסְגְרָנָה כְּהֵנָּא שְׁבַעַא יוֹמִין: 27 וְיִחְזוּנָה כְּהֵנָּא בְּיוֹמָא שְׁבִיעָאָה אִם אוֹסְפָא תוֹסֵף בְּמִשְׁכָּא וְיִסְאֵב יְתֵה מִכְתֵּשׁ סְגִירוּתָא הִיא: 28 וְאִם אֲבִתְרָהָא קָמַת בְּהֵרְתָא לֹא אוֹסִיפַת בְּמִשְׁכָּא וְהִיא עֵמִיא עִמָּא עִמָּא כְּוָזָה וְיִדְכְנָה כְּהֵנָּא אָרִי רִשָּׁם כְּוָזָה הִיא: 29 וְגַבְרָא אוֹ אֲתֵתָא אָרִי יְהִי בֵּה מִכְתֵּשׁא בְּרִישׁ אוֹ בְּקִוּן: 30 וַיִּחַזֵּי כְּהֵנָּא יְתֵ מִכְתֵּשׁא וְהָא מְחַזְוֵהִי עֵמִיק מִן מִשְׁכָּא וְכֵה שְׁעָר סָמֹךְ דְּעָדֹךְ וְיִסְאֵב יְתֵה כְּהֵנָּא נִתְקָא הוּא סְגִירוּת רִישָׁא אוֹ דְקָנָא הוּא:

25 וְרָאָה אֶתְהּ הַכְּהֵן וְהֵנָּה נִהְפֵּף שְׁעָר לְכֹן בְּבִהְרֵת וּמְרָאָהָ עֵמִיק מִן־הַעוֹר צָרַעַת הוּא בְּמִכּוּה פְּרָחָה וּטְמֵא אֹתוֹ הַכְּהֵן נִגַּע צָרַעַת הוּא: 26 וְאִם יִרְאֶנָּה הַכְּהֵן וְהֵנָּה אִין־בְּבִהְרֵת שְׁעָר לְכֹן וּשְׁפִלָּה אִינְנָה מִן־הַעוֹר וְהוּא כְּהָה וְהַסְגִּירוֹ הַכְּהֵן שְׁבַעַת יָמִים: 27 וְרָאָהּ הַכְּהֵן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי אִם־פָּשְׂהָ תִפְשֶׂה בְּעוֹר וּטְמֵא הַכְּהֵן אֹתוֹ נִגַּע צָרַעַת הוּא: 28 וְאִם־תִּחְתְּיָהּ תַעֲמֹד הַבְּהֵרֵת לֹא־פִשְׂתָּהּ בְּעוֹר וְהוּא כְּהָה שְׂאֵת הַמִּכּוּה הוּא וּטְהִירוֹ הַכְּהֵן כִּי־צָרַכְתָּ הַמִּכּוּה הוּא: פ
 ◆ חֲמִישִׁי 29 וְאִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה כִּי־יִהְיֶה כּוֹ נִגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ אוֹ בְּזָקָן: 30 וְרָאָה הַכְּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע וְהֵנָּה מְרָאָהּ עִמָּק מִן־הַעוֹר וְכוּ שְׁעָר צָהָב דָּק וּטְמֵא אֹתוֹ הַכְּהֵן נִתְקָא הוּא צָרַעַת הָרֹאשׁ אוֹ הַזָּקָן הוּא:

— RASHI —

29 בְּרֹאשׁ אוֹ בְּזָקָן. בָּא הַכְּתוּב לְחַלֵּק בֵּין נִגַּע שְׁבַמְקוֹם שְׁעָר לְנִגַּע שְׁבַמְקוֹם בְּשָׂר, שְׂזָה סִימְנוֹ בְּשָׂר לְכֹן וְזֶה סִימְנוֹ בְּשָׂר צָהָב: 30 וְכוּ שְׁעָר צָהָב.

the rules governing lesions appearing on the rest of the body, which were discussed previously.¹⁰⁹

If, regardless of whether¹¹⁰ its appearance is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin, there are at least two hairs inside it that are thin—i.e., shorter than the other hairs¹¹¹—and have turned from their natural color¹¹² into pale gold,¹¹³ the priest must pronounce him defiled, for it is a *netek*, which is the name¹¹⁴ of *tzara'at* of the head or the beard. If there is only one (or no) gold hair within the lesion, or if the gold hair is as long as the rest of the hair, or if within the lesion there are at least two naturally colored hairs remaining from before the lesion appeared (even if there are now also two or more gold hairs within the lesion),¹¹⁵ the person is not defiled.

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29 If a man or a woman has a lesion on the head or on the beard: As was noted above,¹¹⁶ the eruption of *tzara'at* on the head is caused by haughtiness, as opposed to *tzara'at* elsewhere on the body, which is the result of gossip or slander. The reason for this

difference is that gossip and slander are superficial misdeeds, as explained above,¹¹⁷ which therefore affect the skin elsewhere on the body, whereas haughtiness is a warped mental attitude, which therefore affects the head.¹¹⁸

108. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 5:11. 109. Above, vv. 1-17. 110. *Sifra, Tazria, Negaim, parashah* 5:4; *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:1. 111. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:4. 112. *Sifra, Tazria, Negaim*, chapter 9:14. 113. Rashi on v. 37, below. 114. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 93, note 12. 115. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:6. 116. V. 2. 117. On v. 2. 118. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 99.

25 the priest must examine it. If at least two originally dark hairs in the snow-white or other spot have turned white, and the appearance is, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, deeper than that of the skin (due to its shininess), or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, not any deeper than that of the skin (due to its dullness), it is *tzara'at* that has spread in the burn. The priest must pronounce him defiled, for the transmutation of dark hairs into white indicates that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion.

26 But if, when the priest examines it, the snow-white spot or other spot does not contain newly white hair, and its appearance is, in the case of a snow-white or lime-white spot, lower than that of the skin, or in the case of a wool-white or egg-membrane-white spot, not any lower than that of the skin because it is paler than a snow-white or lime-white spot, the priest must quarantine him for seven days.

27 The priest must examine him on the seventh day. If the lesion has spread on the skin—covering more (but not all) of the body—or at least two of its previously dark hairs have turned white, the priest must pronounce him defiled, for it is then clear that this spot is a *tzara'at*-lesion.

28 If the snow-white spot or other spot remained the same size, not having spread on the skin, and it became darker than it was before (even though it has not darkened to the extent that it no longer exhibits one of the four degrees of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*¹⁰⁵)—such that, for example, in the case of an originally snow-white spot, it is now only a wool-white spot on the burn—the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement, because it is now clear that the lesion is only the scar tissue of the burn. No second week of quarantine is required.

Although the same diagnostic procedures apply both to potential *tzara'at*-lesions that develop out of an inflammation and those that develop out of a burn, they are still considered two distinct types of *tzara'at*: adjacent appearances of these two types of lesion do not combine to cover the requisite area to be considered problematic.

Tzara'at that Develops on the Head

- ◆ *Fifth Reading* **29** If a lesion appears on a part of the head that is usually covered with hair, the laws regarding how *tzara'at* can develop out of such a lesion differ from those governing how it can develop out of lesions elsewhere on the body (see Figure 4, p. 98).

If a man or a woman has a lesion of any color or combination of colors,¹⁰⁶ covering at least an area equivalent to a square each of whose sides is equal to the diameter of a Cilician bean [i.e., 154 mm² or 0.24 in²],¹⁰⁷ on the normally hairy part of the head or on the part of the head where the beard grows,

30 the priest must examine the lesion. If, however, a lesion occurs on a part of the head where no hair normally grows (e.g., a woman's chin) or where hair will normally grow but has not yet grown (e.g., a boy's chin),¹⁰⁸ it is diagnosed according to

¹⁰⁵. Nachmanides v. 6, above; Mizrahi on v. 5, above; Rabbeinu Asher and Rabbeinu Shimshon of Sens on *Negaim* 1:3. ¹⁰⁶. *Tosefta Negaim* 1:2; see *Tosefot Yom Tov* on *Negaim* 1:4, s.v. *Rabbi Dosa*. ¹⁰⁷. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:1. See above, v. 10.

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31 וְאָרִי יִחֲזֶי כִּהְנָא יֵת מִכְתֵּשׁ נִתְקָא וְהָא לִית מְחֻזְוֵי עֵמִיק מִן מִשְׁבָּא וְשַׁעַר אוֹכֵם לִית בֵּה וְיִסְגַר כִּהְנָא יֵת מִכְתֵּשׁ שְׂבָעָא יוֹמִין: 32 וְיִחֲזֶי כִּהְנָא יֵת מִכְתֵּשׁא בְיוֹמָא שְׂבִיעָאָה וְהָא לֹא אוֹסֵף נִתְקָא וְלֹא הָוָה בֵּה שַׁעַר סְמֻק וּמְחֻזְוֵי נִתְקָא לִית עֵמִיק מִן מִשְׁבָּא: 33 וְיִגְלַח סַחְרָנִי נִתְקָא וְדַעַם נִתְקָא לֹא יִגְלַח וְיִסְגַר כִּהְנָא יֵת נִתְקָא שְׂבָעָא יוֹמִין תְּנַנְוֹת: 34 וְיִחֲזֶי כִּהְנָא יֵת נִתְקָא בְיוֹמָא שְׂבִיעָאָה וְהָא לֹא אוֹסֵף נִתְקָא בְּמִשְׁבָּא וּמְחֻזְוֵי לִיתוּדֵי עֵמִיק מִן מִשְׁבָּא וְיִדְכִי יֵתָה כִּהְנָא וְיִצְבַע לְבוֹשׁוּדֵי וְיִדְכִי: 35 וְאִם אוֹסֵפָא יוֹסֵף נִתְקָא בְּמִשְׁבָּא בְּתַר דְּכוּתָהּ: 36 וְיִחֲזֵנָה כִּהְנָא וְהָא אוֹסֵף נִתְקָא בְּמִשְׁבָּא לֹא יִבְקַר כִּהְנָא לְשַׁעַר סְמֻק מִסָּבָב הוּא: 37 וְאִם כִּד הָוָה קָם נִתְקָא וְשַׁעַר אוֹכֵם צִמַח בֵּה אִתְסִי נִתְקָא דְכִי הוּא וְיִדְכֵנָה כִּהְנָא: 38 וְגַבֵּר אוֹ אִתְמַת אֲרִי יְהִי בְּמִשְׁךָ בְּסַרְהוֹן בְּהָרֵן בְּהָרֵן חוֹרֵן: 39 וְיִחֲזֶי כִּהְנָא וְהָא בְּמִשְׁךָ בְּסַרְהוֹן בְּהָרֵן עֵמִין חוֹרֵן בְּהָקָא הוּא סְגִי בְּמִשְׁבָּא דְכִי הוּא:

31 וְכִי־רָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־נִגְעַת הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ אִין־מְרֹאֵהוּ עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעוֹר וְשַׁעַר שָׁחַר אִין בּוֹ וְהִסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־נִגְעַת הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: 32 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי וְהִנֵּה לֹא־פָשָׁה הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ וְלֹא־הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר צָהָב וּמְרֹאֵה הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ אִין עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעוֹר: 33 וְהִתְגַּלַּח וְאֶת־הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ לֹא יִגְלַח וְהִסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שְׁנִית: 34 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי וְהִנֵּה לֹא־פָשָׁה הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ בְּעוֹר וּמְרֹאֵהוּ אִינְנוּ עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעוֹר וְטָהַר אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן וְכַבֵּם בְּגִדָיו וְטָהַר: 35 וְאִם־פָּשָׁה יִפְשָׁה הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ בְּעוֹר אַחֲרֵי טָהֲרָתוֹ: 36 וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה פָּשָׁה הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ בְּעוֹר לֹא־יִבְקַר הַכֹּהֵן לְשַׁעַר הַצָּהָב טָמֵא הוּא: 37 וְאִם־בְּעֵינָיו עָמַד הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ וְשַׁעַר שָׁחַר צִמַח־בּוֹ נִרְפָּא הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ טָהוֹר הוּא וְטָהֲרוּ הַכֹּהֵן: 38 וְאִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה כִּי־יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרָם בַּהֲרַת בַּהֲרַת לְבָנָת: 39 וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרָם בַּהֲרַת בַּהֲרַת לְבָנָת בְּהֵק הוּא פָּרַח בְּעוֹר טָהוֹר הוּא: 38

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37 וְשַׁעַר שָׁחַר. מִנִּין אֵף הִזְרֵק וְהָאֲדָם שְׂאִינוּ צָהָב? תְּלַמּוּד לומר: "ושַׁעַר". וְלִמָּה "צָהָב" דוּמָה? לְתַבְנִית הַזֶּהָב. "צָהָב" — כִּמוֹ "זָהָב", אוֹרֵב־לֵא בְּלַעֲזֵי: טָהוֹר הוּא וְטָהֲרוּ הַכֹּהֵן. הָא טָמֵא שְׁטַהֲרוּ הַכֹּהֵן — לֹא טָהוֹר: 38 בַּהֲרַת. חֲבַרְבוּרוֹת: 39 כְּהוֹת לְבָנָת. שְׂאִין לְבָן שְׁלֵהֵן עוֹ, אֶלֶּא פְּהָה: בַּהֵק. כִּמִּין לְבָן הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ בְּבִשָּׂר אָדָם אָדָם שְׂקוֹרִין רו"ש" בֵּין חֲבַרְבוּרוֹת אֲדַמִּימוֹתוֹ קְרוּי "בַּהֵק", כְּאִישׁ עֲדָשָׁן שְׂבִין עֲדָשָׁה לְעֲדָשָׁה מְבַהֵיק הַבֶּשֶׂר לְבָלָן צַח:

31 וְשַׁעַר שָׁחַר אִין בּוֹ. הָא אִם הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר שָׁחַר — טָהוֹר, וְאִין צְרִיף לְהַסְגִּיר, שְׂשַׁעַר שָׁחַר סִימֵן טָהֲרָה הוּא בְּנִתְקִים, כִּמוֹ שְׂנַאֲמַר: "ושַׁעַר שָׁחַר צִמַח בּוֹ" וְגו': 32 וְהִנֵּה לֹא פָּשָׁה וְגו'. הָא אִם פָּשָׁה, אוֹ הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר צָהָב — טָמֵא: 33 וְהִתְגַּלַּח. סְבִיבוֹת הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ: וְאֵת הַנֶּהֱלֵךְ לֹא יִגְלַח. מְנִיחַ שְׁתֵּי שַׁעֲרוֹת סְמוּךְ לוֹ סְבִיב, כְּדִי שִׁיחָא נִכַר אִם פָּשָׁה, שְׂאִם יִפְשָׁה יַעֲבַר הַשַּׁעֲרוֹת וְיִצֵּא לְמָקוֹם הַגְּלוּחַ: 35 אַחֲרֵי טָהֲרָתוֹ. אִין לִי אֶלֶּא פּוֹשָׁה לְאַחַר הַפְּטוֹר, מִנִּין אֵף כְּסוּף שְׂבוּעַ רֵאשׁוֹן וְכְסוּף שְׂבוּעַ שְׁנִי? תְּלַמּוּד לומר: "פָּשָׁה יִפְשָׁה":

13. פסוק לו. 14. צִתְהַבֵּב. 15. אֲדַמּוּי.

that can develop into *tzara'at*, i.e., **white spots**,

39 the priest must examine them. If there are dark white spots on the skin of their flesh, i.e., darker than any of the previously described four grades of whiteness that can develop into *tzara'at*, **it is nothing more than a lack of pigmentation that has erupted on the skin. He or she is not defiled**, even if symptoms characteristic of *tzara'at* later develop within these spots.

31 But if the priest examines the *netek*-lesion, and, regardless of whether its appearance is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin, there are not two black hairs—or hairs of any other color, including gold—in it, the priest must quarantine the person with the *netek*-lesion for seven days.

32 The priest must examine the lesion on the seventh day. If the *netek* has shrunk to less than the symptomatic area or naturally colored hair has appeared within it, the person is no longer defiled; the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement, and he must undergo the purification process that will be detailed later.¹¹⁹ If the *netek* has spread¹²⁰ and there is no naturally colored hair in its new growth, or if two or more gold hairs have appeared within it, the individual is defiled and the priest must pronounce him so.¹²¹ **But if there is no change—i.e., the *netek* has not spread and no naturally colored or gold hair appeared in it—then, regardless of whether the appearance of the *netek* is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin,**

33 the person must shave himself in the vicinity of the *netek*, but he must not shave the *netek* or two rows of hairs surrounding and adjacent to the *netek*, in order to enable the priest to easily determine if it has spread when he next examines it. The priest must then quarantine the person with the *netek* again for seven days.

The seventh day of the first quarantine week also counts as the first day of the second quarantine week.¹²²

34 The priest must examine the *netek* on the seventh (i.e., 13th) day. If the *netek* has spread,¹²³ or if gold hair has appeared within it,¹²⁴ the individual is defiled and the priest must pronounce him so. **If there is again no change—i.e., the *netek* did not spread on the skin and no gold hair appeared on it—then, regardless of whether its appearance is deeper or not deeper than that of the skin, the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement, and the individual must immerse himself and his garments in a *mikveh* and undergo the rest of the purification process that will be described later,¹²⁵ and then he will become rid of this defilement in fact.** No third quarantine period is needed.

35 But if the *netek* spreads on the skin after he has been declared rid of this defilement, 36 the priest must examine him, and if the *netek* has indeed spread on the skin, the priest need not search for a gold hair, for he is defiled on account of the *netek* having spread.

Similarly, if two gold hairs appear on the skin after he has been declared rid of this defilement, this suffices to defile him.¹²⁶

37 But if the appearance—i.e., color—of the *netek* has remained the same, or if black hair or hair of any color other than gold has grown in it, the *netek* has healed. He is therefore not defiled, and the priest must pronounce him rid of this defilement.

Suspicion of Tzara'at due to a Lack of Pigmentation

38 If a man or woman has spots on the skin of their flesh that are similar to those

119. 14:1-32. 120. Rashi here and on v. 35. 121. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:2. 122. *Ibid.*, 9:9. 123. Rashi on v. 35. 124. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:2, 9:9. 125. 14:1-32. 126. *Mishneh Torah, Tumat Tzara'at* 8:2.

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40 וגבר ארי יתר שער רישה קריח הוא דכי הוא: 41 ואם מקבל אפוחי יתר שער רישה גליש הוא דכי הוא: 42 וארי יהי בקרחותה או בגלושותה מכתש חור סמוק סגירות סגיא היא בקרחותה או בגלושותה: 43 ויחזי תה בהנא והא עמיק מכתשא חורא סמקא בקרחותה או בגלושותה במחזי סגירות משך בסרא: 44 גבר סגיר הוא מסאב הוא סאבא וסאבנא בהנא ברישה מכתשה: 45 וסגירא די בה מכתשא לבושהי יהון מבועין ורישה יהי פריע ועל שפם באבלא יתעטף ולא תסתאבון ולא תסתאבון יקרי: 46 כל יומי די מכתשא בה יהי מסאב מסאב הוא בלחודויה יתב מקרא למשירתא מותבה:

◆ ששי (שלישי במחוברין) 40 וְאִישׁ כִּי יִמְרַט רֹאשׁוֹ קִרְחָהּ הוּא מְהוּר הוּא: 41 וְאִם מִפְּאֵת פְּנָיו יִמְרַט רֹאשׁוֹ גִבַּח הוּא מְהוּר הוּא: 42 וְכִי־יְהִיָּה בְּקִרְחַת אוֹ בְּגִבַּחַת נָגַע לְבָן אֲדָמָדָם צָרַעַת פִּרְחַת הוּא בְּקִרְחָתוֹ אוֹ בְּגִבַּחָתוֹ: 43 וְרָאָה אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן וְהֵנִיחַ שְׂאֵת־הַנֶּגַע לְבִנְיָהּ אֲדָמָדָת בְּקִרְחָתוֹ אוֹ בְּגִבַּחָתוֹ כַּמְרָאָה צָרַעַת עוֹר בְּשָׂר׃ 44 אִישׁ־צָרוּעַ הוּא טָמֵא הוּא טָמֵא יִטְמְאֵנוּ הַכֹּהֵן בְּרֹאשׁוֹ נִגְעוֹ: 45 וְהַצָּרוּעַ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע בְּגִדָיו יִהְיוּ פְרָמִים וְרֹאשׁוֹ יְהִיָּה פָרוּעַ וְעַל־שִׁפְּם יַעֲמֶה וְטָמֵא | טָמֵא יִקְרָא: 46 כָּל־יְמֵי אֲשֶׁר הַנֶּגַע בּוֹ יִטְמָא טָמֵא הוּא בְּדָד יֵשֵׁב מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה מוֹשְׁבּוֹ: ם

— RASHI —

שאין מטמאין בארבע מראות — שאת ותולדתה, בהרת ותולדתה: 44 בראשו נגעו. אין לי אלא נתקין, מנין לרבות שאר המנגעים? תלמוד לומר: "טמא יטמאנו", לרבות את כלן, על כלן הוא אומר: "בגדיו יהיו פרמים" וגו': 45 פרמים. קרועים: פרוע. מגדל שער: ועל שפם יעטה. באבל: שפם. שער השפתיים, גרינו"ן בלעזי: וטמא טמא יקרא. משמיע שהוא טמא ויפרשו ממנו: 46 בדר ישב. שלא יהיו שאר טמאים יושבים עמו, ואמרו רבותינו¹²⁸: מה נשתנה משאר טמאים לישב בדר? הואיל והוא הבדיל בלשון הרע בין איש לאשתו ובין איש לרעהו, אף הוא יבדל: מחוץ למחנה. חוץ לשלש מחנות:

40 קרח הוא טהור הוא. טהור מטמאת נתקין, שאין נדון בסימני ראש וזקן, שהם מקום שער, אלא בסימני נגעי עור בשר — בשער לבן, מחזה, ופשיון: 41 ואם מפאת פניו. משפוע קדקד כלפי פניו קרוי "גבחת", ואף היצדעין שמכאן ומכאן בכלל, ומשפוע קדקד כלפי אחוריו קרוי "קרחת". 42 נגע לבן אדמדם. פתוך. מנין שאר המראות? תלמוד לומר: "נגע". 43 כמראה צרעת עור בשר. כמראה הצרעת האמור בפרשת עור בשר¹²⁹: "אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו", ומה אמור בו? שמשמא בארבע מראות, ונדון בשני שבועות. ולא כמראה צרעת האמור בשחין ומכודה, שהוא נדון בשבוע אחד, ולא כמראה נתקין של מקום שער,

16. פסוק ב. 17. שפם. 18. ערכין טו, ב.

46 He will remain defiled as long as the lesion remains upon him. Since he is defiled on account of *tzara'at*, he must, unlike a person defiled in any other way, dwell isolated from other people, including other defiled persons.¹²⁸ **His dwelling must be outside the camp:** when we will later be organized into three concentric camps,¹²⁹ he must dwell outside all three. This is a just, corrective reciprocal punishment for his having caused a rift between married couples or friends through gossip or slander.

128. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, p. 74, note 49. 129. Numbers 1:51-2:34; see also Deuteronomy 12:5-18.

Unnatural Baldness

- ◆ *Sixth Reading (Third when combined)* 40 **If a man loses all the hair on the back of his head** (see Figure 5), **he is unnaturally bald**. Therefore, if a lesion develops on this area of his head, **he cannot become defiled** by it according to the diagnostic rules governing normally hairy parts of the head; such a lesion is rather diagnosed according to the rules governing lesions on the rest of the body, which were given previously.¹²⁷

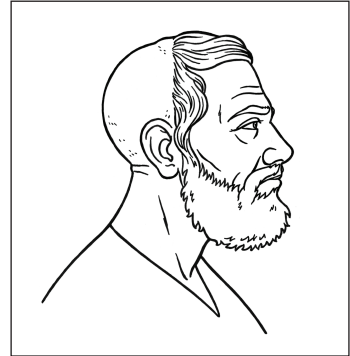


Figure 5. Back Baldness

41 Similarly, **if he loses the hair on the side of his head toward his face**, including the temples on each side of the head (see Figure 6), **he is unnaturally bald at the front**. Therefore, if a lesion develops on this area of his head, **he cannot become defiled** by it according to the diagnostic rules governing normally hairy parts of the head; again, such a lesion is rather diagnosed according to the rules governing lesions on the rest of the body, which were given previously.

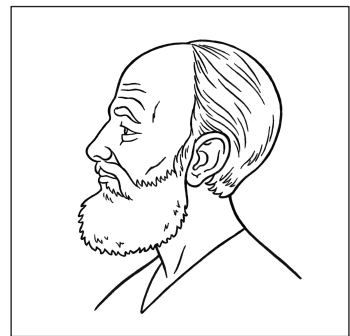


Figure 6. Front Baldness

42 Thus, **if a lesion that is either uniformly white or white with red streaks develops on the back or front bald area** of such a person's head, **it is a likely case of tzara'at erupting on his back or front bald area**.

43 **The priest must therefore examine it. If there is indeed a lesion on his back or front bald area**, and this lesion is either **wool-white** or another of the four shades of white, and its whiteness is either uniformly white or **white with red streaks, like the appearance of tzara'at on the skin of the flesh**, the lesion must be subjected to the diagnostic process described previously for a body-lesion.

44 If the lesion satisfies any of the diagnostic criteria, then **he is a man afflicted with tzara'at; he is defiled. The priest must therefore pronounce him defiled on account of his lesion on his head**.

Behavior Required of a Person Afflicted with Tzara'at

45 As to what must be done with a **person afflicted with any type of tzara'at, i.e., a person on whom there is a lesion** that has been diagnosed as *tzara'at*: **his garments must be torn, the hair on his head must be allowed to overgrow; he must cover his face with a garment down to his mustache (or, if a woman, simply down to the upper lip) and call out loud, "Defiled! Defiled!"** so people will know to stay away from him.

¹²⁷. Above, vv. 1-17. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 92-100.

— ONKELOS —

47 ולבושא ארי יהי בה מכתש סגירו בלבוש עמר או בלבוש בתן: 48 או בשתיא או בערבא לכתנא ולעמרא או במשכא או בכל עבדות משך: 49 ויהי מכתשא ירק או סמוק בלבושא או במשכא או בשתיא או בערבא או בכל מן דמשך מכתש סגירותא הוא ויתחזי לכהנא: 50 ויתחזי כהנא ית מכתשא ויסגר ית מכתשא שבעא יומין: 51 ויתחזי ית מכתשא ביומא שביעאה ארי אוסף מכתשא בלבושא או בשתיא או בערבא או במשכא לכל די יתעבד משכא לעבדתא סגירותא מחסרא מכתשא מסאב הוא: 52 ויפקד ית לבושא או ית שתיא או ית ערבא בעמרא או בכתנא או ית כל מן דמשך די יהי בה מכתשא ארי סגירותא מחסרא היא בגורא תתוקד: 53 ואם יתחזי כהנא והא לא אוסף מכתשא בלבושא או בשתיא או בערבא או בכל מן דמשך: 54 ויפקד כהנא ויהורון ית די בה מכתשא ויסגרנה שבעא יומין תנינות: 55 ויתחזי כהנא בתר דתורו ית מכתשא והא לא שגא מכתשא מן פד הודה ומכתשא לא אוסף מסאב הוא בגורא תוקדנה תברא היא בשחיקותה או בחדותיה:

47 והבגד פייהיה בו נגע צרעת בבגד צמר או בבגד פשתים: 48 או בשתי או בערב לפשתים ולצמר או בעור או בכל מלאכת עור: 49 והיה הנגע ירקרק או אדמדם בבגד או בעור או בשתי או בערב או בכל פליעור נגע צרעת הוא והראה אתהכהן: 50 וראה הכהן אתהנגע והסגיר אתהנגע שבעת ימים: 51 וראה אתהנגע ביום השביעי פיפשה הנגע בבגד או בשתי או בערב או בעור לכל אשריעשה העור למלאכה צרעת ממארת הנגע טמא הוא: 52 ושרף אתהבגד או אתהשתי או אתהערב בצמר או בפשתים או אתכלכלי העור אשריהיה בו הנגע פי צרעת ממארת הוא באש תשרף: 53 ואם יראה הכהן והנה לאפשה הנגע בבגד או בשתי או בערב או בכל פליעור: 54 ועזה הכהן וכבסו את אשרבו הנגע והסגירו שבעת ימים שנית:

◆ שביעי* (רביעי במחובדין) 55 וראה הכהן אחרי הכבס אתהנגע והנה לאהפך הנגע אתיעינו והנגע לאפשה טמא הוא באש תשרפנו פחתת הוא בקרחתו או בגבחתו:

— RASHI —

אשר בו הנגע. יכול מקום הנגע בלבד? תלמוד לומר: "את אשר בו הנגע". וכול כל הבגד פלו טעון פבוס? תלמוד לומר: "הנגע". הא כיצד? יכבס מן הבגד עמו: 55 אחרי הכבס. לשון העשות: לא הפך הנגע את עינו. לא הכהה ממראיתו: והנגע לא פשה. שמענו, שאם לא הפך ולא פשה — טמא, ואין צריך לומר לא הפך ופשה. הפך ולא פשה, אינו יודע מה יעשה לז? תלמוד לומר: "והסגיר את הנגע", מכל מקום. דברי רבי יהודה. וחקמים אומרים וכו', כדאיתא בתורת כהנים, ורמותיה כן לישב המקרא על אפניו: פחתת הוא. לשון גמא, כמו: "באחת הפחתים", כלומר שפלה היא, נגע שמראיו שוקעין: בקרחתו

48 לפשתים ולצמר. של פשתים או של צמר: או בעור. זה עור שלא נעשה בו מלאכה: או בכל מלאכת עור. זה עור שנעשה בו מלאכה: 49 ירקרק. ירק שבירקין: אדמדם. אדם שבאדמים: 51 צרעת ממארת. לשון "סלון ממאיר", פויניט בלעז. ומדרשו: תן בו מארה, שלא תהנה הימנו: 52 בצמר או בפשתים. של צמר או של פשתים, זהו פשוטו. ומדרשו: יכול לביא גוי צמר ואניצי פשתן וישרפם עמו, תלמוד לומר: "הוא באש תשרף", אינה צריכה דבר אחר עמו. אם כן, מה תלמוד לומר: "בצמר או בפשתים"? להוציא את האמירות שבו, שהן ממין אחר. "אמירות", לשון שפה, כמו "אמרא": 54 את

19. יחזקאל כח, כד. 20. דוקר. 21. תורת כהנים. 22. שם. 23. שמואל ב, י, ט.

*If the Sabbath of *parashat Tazria* occurs on the 1st of Nisan, the sixth reading continues until the end of the *parashah*, the *Maftir*-reading for *Rosh Chodesh* (p. 266) is the seventh reading, and the *Maftir* for *Shabbat HaChodesh* (p. 281) is read as the *Maftir*.

Tzara'at on Garments

47 As for the laws regarding a garment that has the lesion of *tzara'at* upon it, these laws apply only to lesions (a) on woolen garments, (b) on linen garments, 48 (c) on threads prepared to be used as the warp or the woof of linen or wool garments,¹³⁰ (d) on unworked leather, or (e) on anything made from leather (see Figure 7, page 98).

49 If the lesion on the garment, on the warp- or woof-threads, on the leather garment, or on any leather article, covers at least an area equivalent to a square each of whose sides are equal to the diameter of a Cicilian bean¹³¹ [i.e., 154 mm² or 0.24 in²] and is pure green or pure red, it is a lesion of *tzara'at*, and it must therefore be shown to the priest.

50 The priest must examine the lesion, confirm that it is the required color and size, and quarantine the article with the lesion for seven days.

51 He must examine the lesion on the seventh day. If the lesion has spread on the garment, the warp- or woof-threads, the leather garment, or any article made from leather, the lesion is an onerous *tzara'at*-lesion—in that the article's owner will suffer inconvenience and monetary loss on its account—since it is ritually defiled and may no longer be used.

52 Rather, he must burn the garment, the warp- or woof-threads of wool or linen, or whatever leather article that has the lesion upon it, since the lesion is an onerous *tzara'at*-lesion. Nonetheless, only the wool, linen, or leather must be burned and destroyed in fire; if the hems of the garment are made out of a different material, they need not be destroyed.

Before it is burned, the afflicted article is ritually defiled to the same degree as a man who has suffered two or more discrete non-seminal discharges,¹³² which will be discussed in detail later.¹³³

53 But if the priest examines the lesion and the lesion has not spread on the garment, the warp- or woof-threads, or whatever leather article it is on,

54 the priest must order that the part of the article on which the lesion is located be washed, and he must quarantine it again for seven days. The entire article need not be washed; only the area containing the lesion and the adjacent part.

- ◆ *Seventh Reading** (Fourth when combined) 55 Then the priest must examine the article after the lesion has been washed and quarantined for a second week. If the lesion has not changed its color by turning a lighter or darker shade of red or green, and the lesion has either not spread at all or has spread but not covered the entire article, it is defiled. You must burn it in fire, for it is now clear that the lesion is a deep-looking lesion on the worn or new article. If, however, the discolored lesion spreads over the entire article, it thereby becomes rid of this defilement.

If the lesion does not spread but changes in color from pure red to pure green (or vice versa), it must either be treated as a new lesion and quarantined or be pronounced defiled.¹³⁴

130. *Negaim* 11:8; *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 13:8. 131. *Mishneh Torah*, *Tumat Tzara'at* 12:1. 132. *Ibid.*, 13:13. 133. Below, 15:4-12. 134. *Sifra*, chapter 15:7.

ONKELOS

56 ואם חזא כהנא וקא עמא
מכתשא בתר דחורו יתה ויבוע
יתה מן לבושא או מן משכא או
מן שתאי או מן ערבא: 57 ואם
תתחוי עוד בלבושא או בשתיא
או בערבא או בכל מן דמשף סגיא
היא בנורא תוקדנה ית די בה
מכתשא: 58 ולבושא או שתאי או
ערבא או כל מן דמשף די יתחור
ייעדי מנהון מכתשא ויצטבע
תנינות וידבי: 59 דא אורייתא
דמכתש סגירו בלבוש עמר או
כתנא או שתאי או ערבא או כל
מן דמשף לדכיותה או לסאבותה:

56 ואם ראה הכהן והנה פה הנגע אחרי הפס אתו
וקרע אתו מן התבגד או מן העור או מן השתי או מן
הערב:

◆ מפטיר 57 ואם תראה עוד בבגד או בשתי או בערב
או בכלי בלי עור פרחת הוא באש תשרפנו את אשר
בו הנגע: 58 והבגד או השתי או הערב או כל כלי
העור אשר תכבסם וסר מהם הנגע וכבס שנית וטהר:
59 זאת תורת נגע צרעת בגד הצמר או הפשתים או
השתי או הערב או כלי בלי עור לטהרו או לטמאו:

ס"ז פסוקים. בנייה סימן.

RASHI

הקדקד ולא תריו. כף מפרש בתורת פהנים: 56 וקרע
אתו. יקרע מקום הנגע מן הבגד וישרפנו: 57 פרחת
הוא. דבר החור וצומח: באש תשרפנו. את כל
הבגד: 58 וסר מהם הנגע. אם כשכבסוהו בתחלה
על פי בהן, סר ממנו הנגע לגמרי: וכבס שנית. לשון
טבילה. תרגום של "כבוסין" שבפרשה זו לשון לבון
— "ויתחור", חוץ מזה, שאינו ללבון אלא לטבל,
לכה תרגמו: "ויצטבע". וכן כל כבוסים בגדים שהן
לטיבילה, מתרגמין: "ויצטבע":

חסלת פרשת תזריע

או בגבחתו. כתרגומו: "בשחיקותה או בכתותה":
קרחתו. שחקים ישנים. ומפני המדרש שהצריך
לגורה שנה: מנין לפריחה בבגדים שהיא טהורה?
נאמרה "קרחת וגבחת" באדם, ונאמרה "קרחת
וגבחת" בבגדים. מה להלן פרח בכלו — טהור, אף
כאן פרח בכלו — טהור, לכה אחז הפתוב לשון
"קרחת וגבחת". ולענין פרושו ותרגומו זהו משמעו:
"קרחת" — לשון ישנים, "וגבחת" — לשון חדשים,
כאלו נכתב: באחריתו או בקדמותו, שהקרחת לשון
אחורים, והגבחת לשון פנים, כמו שכתוב: "ואם
מפאת פניו וגו', והקרחת כל ששופע ויורד מן

24. פסוק מט.

56 But if the priest examines the article after it has been washed and quarantined for a second week, and the lesion has turned a lighter or darker shade of red or green, he must rip it out of the garment, the leather, or the warp- or woof-threads, and burn the part of the article that was ripped out.

- ◆ **Maftir 57 If the lesion reappears on the garment, the warp- or woof-threads, or any leather article, it is a recurrent growth. You must burn in fire the entire article upon which the lesion is found.**

58 Regarding any garment, warp- or woof-threads, or leather article that you wash by order of the priest, quarantine for a second week, and from which the lesion then disappears entirely, it must be immersed a second time—this time not to be washed, but to be purified¹³⁵ in a *mikveh*—and then it will be rid of this defilement.

59 This is the law governing the diagnosis of a lesion of *tzara'at* on a woolen or linen garment, warp- or woof-threads, or any leather article, according to which it becomes rid of defilement or defiled."

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Tazria* is on p. 243.

If it is *Shabbat HaChodesh* (and it is not also the 1st of Nisan), the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *Shabbat HaChodesh* (p. 281) are read instead of the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *parashat Tazria*.

If it is the 1st of Nisan, the seventh reading is the reading for *Rosh Chodesh* (p. 266) and the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *Shabbat HaChodesh* (p. 281) are read instead of the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *parashat Tazria*.



¹³⁵. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 92-99.

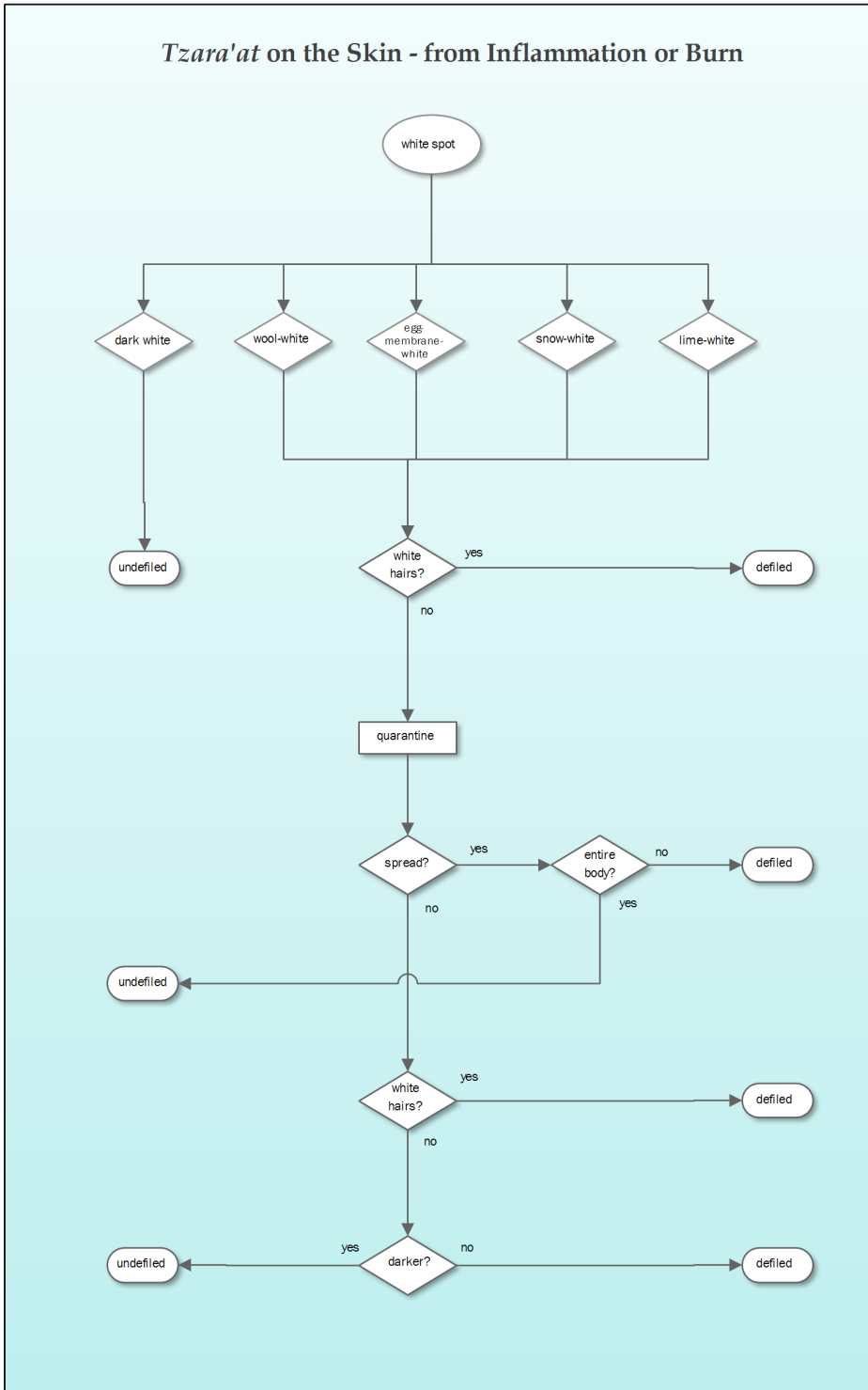


Figure 3. Tzara'at on the Skin— from an Inflammation or Burn

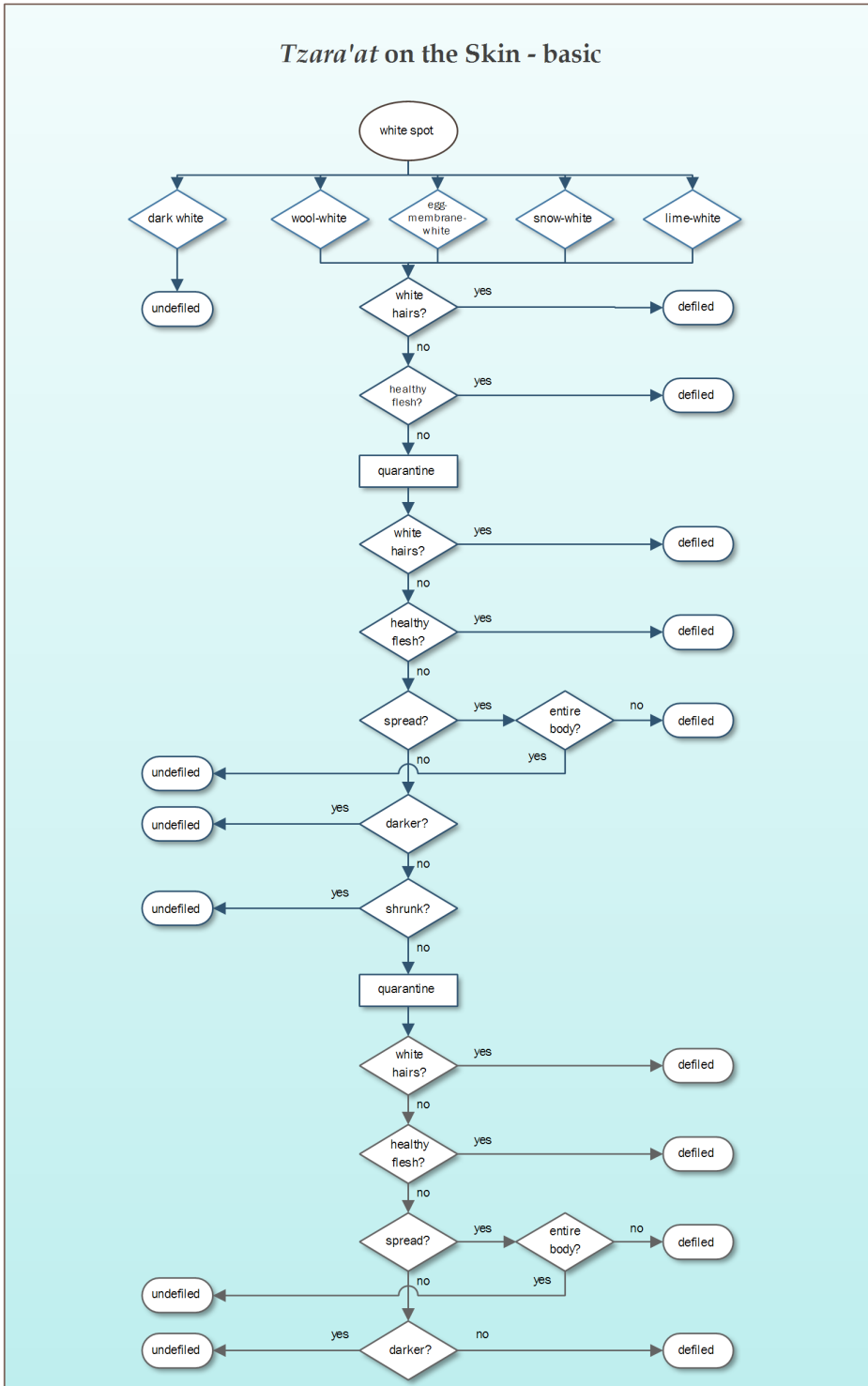


Figure 2. Tzara'at on the Skin – Basic

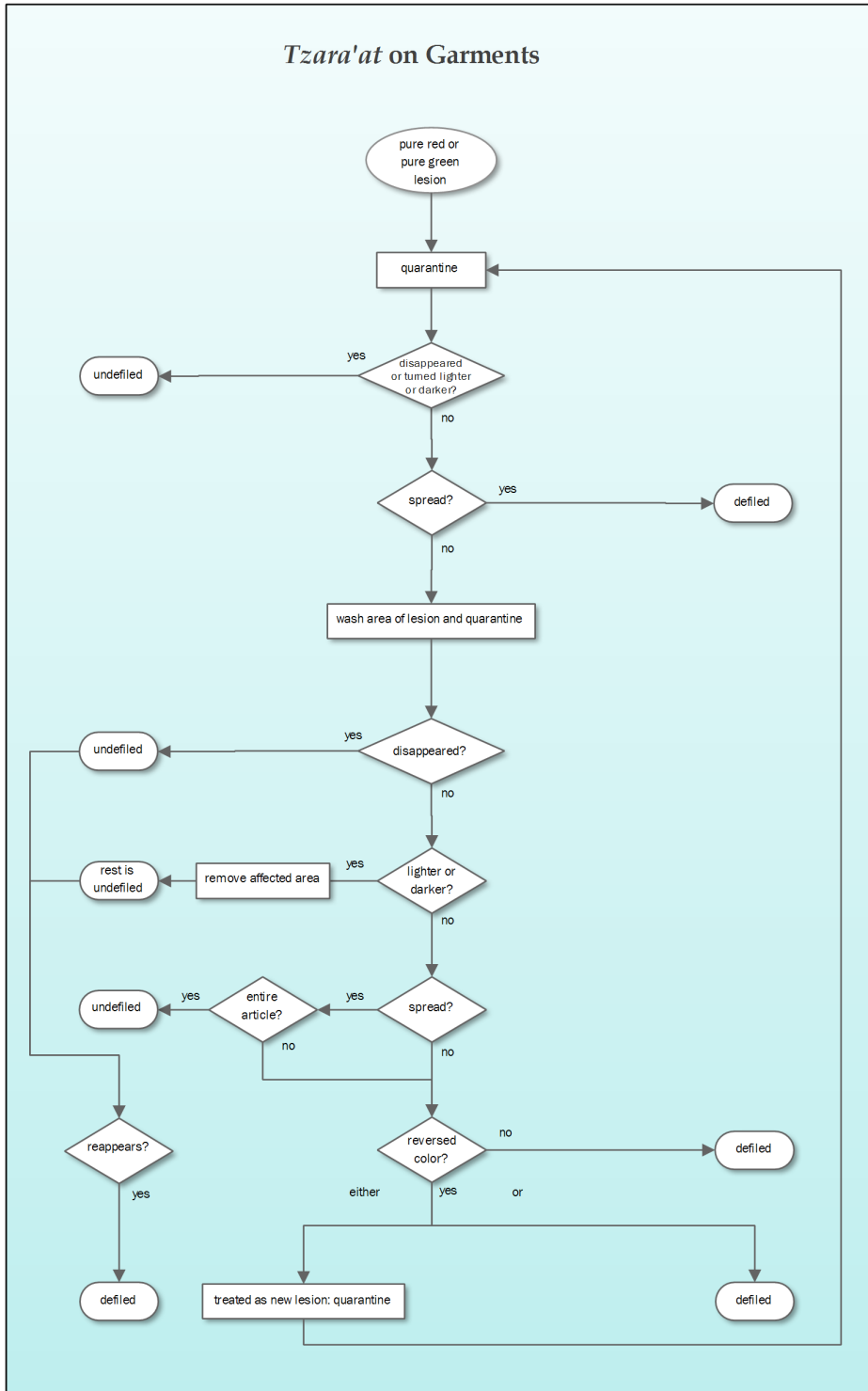


Figure 7. Tzara'at on Garments

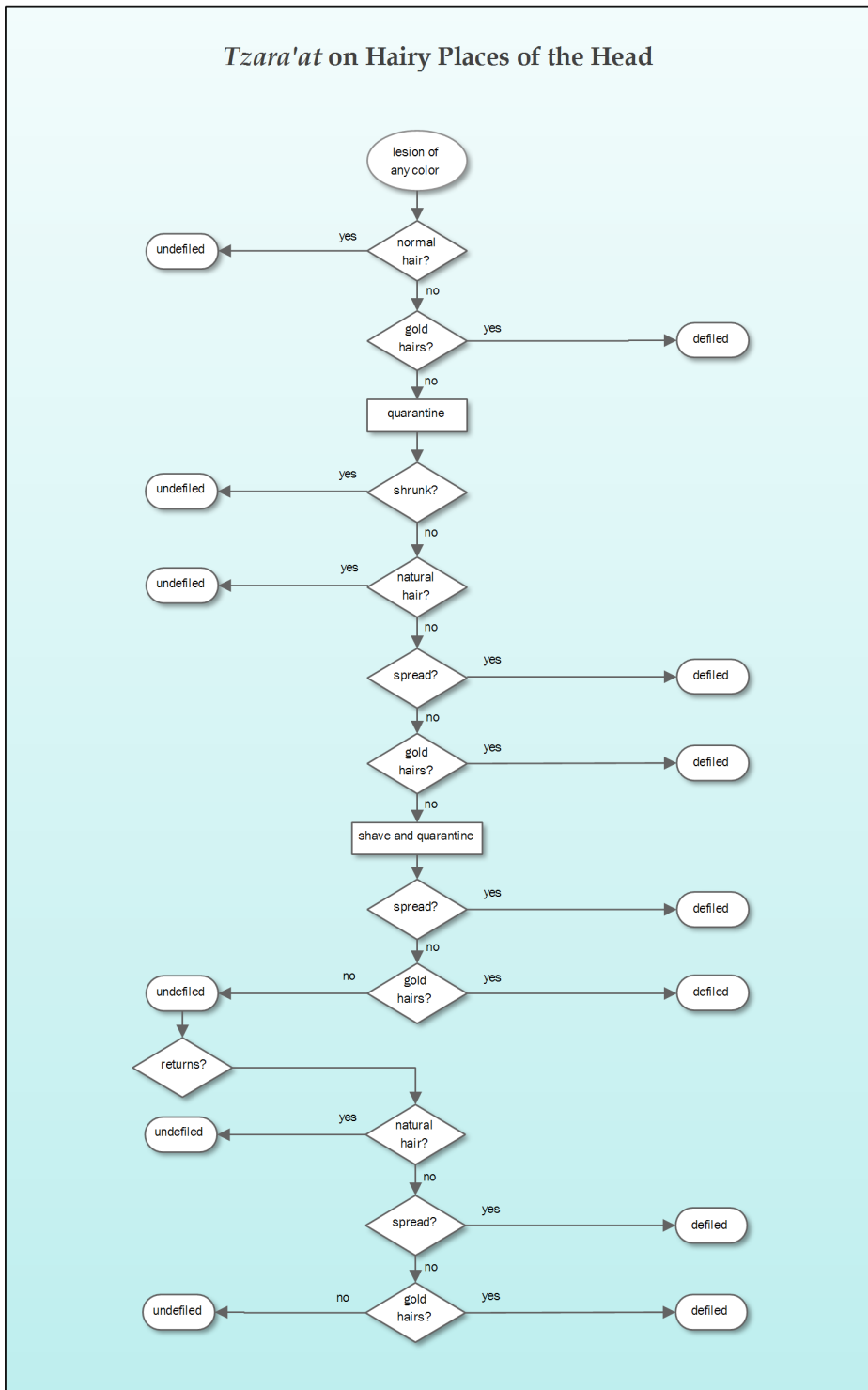


Figure 4. Tzara'at on the Hairy Places of the Head

Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

