

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH ISSUE 28

5th April 2014

METZORA

5th Nissan 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 14, verses 1 - 12

- ✚ Hashem teaches Moshe the process that will allow a Metzora (Someone who has been diagnosed with Tzara'at (a supernatural disease which looks very similar to leprosy)), to re-enter back to the main camp.
- ✚ A Kohen first visits the Metzora outside of the camp for assessment. If they find the Metzora healed, the Kohen tells them they must bring two birds to begin the purification process.
- ✚ The first bird is slaughtered, and its blood is caught in an earthenware bowl. The blood is then sprinkled seven times on the Metzora. The second bird is then set free.
- ✚ The Metzora must then shave off their hair, wash their clothes and immerse themselves in a Mikvah.
- ✚ The Metzora can then be allowed into back into the main camp, but is not allowed to return to their own home for seven days.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 14, verses 13 - 20

- ✚ On the eighth and final day of the purification process, the Metzora must bring four types of korbanos. A Korban Asham (Guilt offering), Korban Hatat (Sin offering), Korban Olah (Burnt Offering) and a Korban Mincha (Meal offering)

Sh'lisi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 14, verses 21 - 32

- ✚ If the individual suffering from Tzara'at cannot afford the above korbanos, two birds can be substituted for two of the animals.
- ✚ The rest of the Aliya describes the slightly altered purification process reserved for someone who is impoverished.

R'VI'I - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 14 verses 33 - 43

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe and Aaron that even Houses can be afflicted with Tzara'at.
- ✚ If a person thinks his Home is affected, he must first inform a Kohen, and then remove all the furniture and personal belongings out of the house, ready for the Kohen to come and inspect the walls.
- ✚ If traces of Tzara'at is found, the Kohen will quarantine the house for seven days.
- ✚ Depending on the spread of the Tzara'at, the home is either declared to be Tahor (pure), or the specific stones effected are removed from the house, or, in the most extreme situations, the house is completely demolished and rebuilt.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 14, verse 44 - Chapter 15, verse 15

- ✚ A Man is deemed as a 'Zav' if he has diagnosed with either a sexual disease or an unnatural seminal discharge. Once recovered, the Zav must count seven days, then wash his clothes and immerse himself in a Mikvah to become pure.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 15, verses 16 - 28

- ✚ The laws relating to the ritual impurities and its purification process of a 'Niddah' (menstruating woman), and a man who has cohabited with her during her cycle, are discussed in detail here.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 15, verses 29 - 33

- ✚ Under certain circumstances, menstruating women were required to bring and offer up two bird Korbonos in order to attain purity. The method how it was done is explained here.

Haftorah – MELAHIM II (2ND BOOK OF KINGS) Chapter 7 verses 3 to 20

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ A catastrophic famine was raging in the northern territories of Israel. King Jehoram of Israel was contemplating having Elisha the Navi killed because he believed that had Elisha daverned (prayed) on his peoples behalf, the entire tragedy could have been prevented.
- ✚ Elisha reassured the king that the famine would come to an end the very next day and food will be plentiful once more.
- ✚ The King's officer disbelieved him and scoffed at the prophecy made. Elisha responded, 'You will see with your own eyes what I say is true, but you shall not reap any benefit or eat from any of the produce.'
- ✚ Four men suffering from Tzara'at who were dwelling in quarantine were so hungry, that in desperation decided to approach their enemy's camp, to beg for food, but upon arrival they found the place deserted.
- ✚ The men reported their findings to King Jehoram. Even though the king originally thought the enemy were playing a trick on him and were preparing a surprise attack against his kingdom, he sent messengers to confirm the four Tzara'at statement. The people, realizing a miracle had taken place, swarmed out of the city and looted the enemy camp, thus breaking the famine and fulfilling Elisha's prophecy.
- ✚ The officer who mocked Elisha was trampled to death by the rampaging crowds fulfilling the Navi's words.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ The Haftorah relates the story of four men stricken by Tzara'at, a skin ailment caused by sins, which was one of the main topics of this week's Torah reading.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

In this week's Parsha we continue delving into the topic of the mysterious disease known as Tzara'at, (any visible ailment that produces white flaking skin, or other type of blisters or eruptions found on the skin like leprosy for example.) These types of diseases were greatly feared in ancient times and anyone who happened to be afflicted were removed from the community so as to not infect others and could only return once the symptoms had left.

However the Torah tells us, that is not only an individual that come down with Tzara'at, but even a house can be infected with it too. Loshen Hara is such an evil transgression that if one says it in a building, then the building itself is affected.

However this symbol of an evil impiety could also prove helpful. There's a Midrash that tells us, when Bnai Yisrael first entered the land of Israel and began conquering it, a majority of the houses which were ceased, were miraculously plagued with Tzara'at because the new inhabitants had spoken Loshen Hara. Just like we learned in this week's sedra, the walls had to be knocked down and rebuilt. The Midrash continues to say, that as Bnai Yisrael were ripping down the walls, they all discovered secret cavities, hiding a multitude of treasures, jewellery and other riches.

Why should one profit from aveiros (sins)? It states in the Talmud that several factors are determined in a person's life at the time of their conception. One of them is their financial status. How a person gets his wealth is determined by how they lived their life. For those who spoke Loshen Hara and had to break down their own walls in full view of the rest of their community, were publicly humiliated for the sins that they had committed. However, Hashem followed through with His promise. That these individuals will become wealthy. But look at the cost they had to pay first to acquire it.

We have all experienced and should all know how dangerous speaking Loshen Hora can be. Rumours spread like wild fire and eventually end up hurting someone close to us. Yes! An individual may benefit in the short term of speaking bad about another but what about the damage incurred, getting it. All the effects caused by Loshen Hara, do not heal as quickly as a skin disease, and cannot be fixed as easily as rebuilding and replacing bricks in a wall. In fact, It could take a lifetime to make things right again. Is it really worth it. I think not.

