

Parsha Plug: Parshat Tazria Metzora

Vayikra 14:33-47	ויקרא יד:לג-מז
<p>33 And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 34 When you come to the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as a possession, and I place a lesion of tzaraat upon a house in the land of your possession, 35 and the one to whom the house belongs comes and tells the kohen, saying, "Something like a lesion has appeared to me in the house," 36 the kohen shall order that they clear out the house, before the kohen comes to look at the lesion, so that everything in the house should not become unclean. After this, the kohen shall come to look at the house. 37 And he shall look at the lesion. If the lesion in the walls of the house consists of dark green or dark red sunken looking stains, appearing as if deeper than the wall, 38 then the kohen shall go out of the house to the entrance of the house, and he shall quarantine the house for seven days. 39 Then the kohen shall return on the seventh day and look. If the lesion has spread in the walls of the house, 40 the kohen shall order that they remove the stones upon which the lesion is, and they shall cast them away outside the city, to an unclean place. 41 And he shall scrape out the house from the inside, all around, and they shall pour out the dust from what they scraped, outside the city, into an unclean place. 42 And they shall take other stones and bring them instead of those stones. And he shall take other dust, and plaster the house. 43 And if the lesion returns and erupts in the house, after he had removed the stones, and after the house had been scraped around and after it had been plastered, 44 then the kohen shall come and look. If the lesion in the house has spread, it is malignant tzaraat in the house; it is unclean. 45 He shall demolish the house, its stones, its wood, and all the dust of the house, and he shall take them outside the city, to an unclean place. 46 And anyone entering the house during all the days of its quarantine shall become unclean until the evening. 47 And whoever lies down in the house, shall immerse his garments, and whoever eats in the house, shall immerse his garments.</p>	<p>לג וַיְדַבֵּר ה', אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר. לִד כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם לְאֻחֻזָּה; וְנִתְּתִי נֹגַע צָרַעַת, בְּבֵית אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזַּתְכֶם. לֵה וּבֹא אִשְׁר-לוֹ הַבֵּית, וְהִגִּיד לַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר: כָּנָנִיעַ, נִרְאָה לִי בַּבֵּית. לוֹ וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וּפָנּוּ אֶת-הַבֵּית, בְּטָרָם יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן לִרְאוֹת אֶת-הַנֹּגֵעַ, וְלֹא יִטְמָא, כָּל-אִשְׁר בַּבֵּית; וְאַחֵר כֵּן יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן, לִרְאוֹת אֶת-הַבֵּית. לוֹ וְרָאָה אֶת-הַנֹּגֵעַ, וְהִנֵּה הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּקִירֵת הַבֵּית, שְׁקֵעֵרוֹרוֹת וְרִקְרִקוֹת, אוֹ אֲדָמָדֶמֶת; וּמִרְאִיהֶן שָׁפֹל, מִן-הַקִּיר. לֵח וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן מִן-הַבֵּית, אֶל-פֶּתַח הַבֵּית; וְהִסְגִּיר אֶת-הַבֵּית, שְׁבַעַת יָמִים. לט וְשָׁב הַכֹּהֵן, בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי; וְרָאָה, וְהִנֵּה פֶשֶׁה הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּקִירֵת הַבֵּית. מ וְצִוָּה, הַכֹּהֵן, וַחֲלָצוּ אֶת-הָאֲבָנִים, אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶן הַנֹּגֵעַ; וְהִשְׁלִיכוּ אֹתָהֶן אֶל-מַחוּץ לְעִיר, אֶל-מְקוֹם טָמֵא. מא וְאֶת-הַבֵּית יִקְצַע מִבֵּית, סָבִיב; וְשִׁפְכוּ, אֶת-הָעֹפֶר אֲשֶׁר הִקְצֹו, אֶל-מַחוּץ לְעִיר, אֶל-מְקוֹם טָמֵא. מב וְלָקְחוּ אֲבָנִים אֲחֵרוֹת, וְהִבִּיאוּ אֶל-תַּחַת הָאֲבָנִים; וְעָפֶר אַחֵר יִקַּח, וְטָח אֶת-הַבֵּית. מגוּאִם-יָשׁוּב הַנֹּגֵעַ וּפָרַח בַּבֵּית, אַחֵר חָלַץ אֶת-הָאֲבָנִים, וְאַחֲרֵי הַקְּצוֹת אֶת-הַבֵּית, וְאַחֲרֵי הַטּוֹחַ. מד וּבֹא, הַכֹּהֵן וְרָאָה, וְהִנֵּה פֶשֶׁה הַנֹּגֵעַ בַּבֵּית--צָרַעַת מִמָּאֶרֶת הוּא בַּבֵּית, טָמֵא הוּא. מה וְנִתְּן אֶת-הַבֵּית, אֶת-אֲבָנָיו וְאֶת-עֲצָיו, וְאֶת, כָּל-עֹפֶר הַבֵּית; וְהוֹצִיא אֶל-מַחוּץ לְעִיר, אֶל-מְקוֹם טָמֵא. מוּוְהִבֵּא, אֶל-הַבֵּית, כָּל-יָמִי, הַסִּגִּיר אֹתוֹ--יִטְמָא, עַד-הָעֶרֶב. מז וְהִשְׁכַּב בַּבֵּית, יִכָּבֵס אֶת-בְּגָדָיו; וְהָאָכַל בַּבֵּית, יִכָּבֵס אֶת-בְּגָדָיו.</p>

Rashi on Vayikra 14:34-35	רש"י ויקרא יד:לד-לה
<p>14:34 And I place a lesion of tzaraat: It is good news for them that lesions of tzaraat will come upon them because the Amorites had hidden treasures of gold inside the walls of their houses during the forty years that the Israelites were in the desert. Through the lesion, the person will demolish the house (43-45) and find them. 14:35 Something like a lesion has appeared to me in the house: Even a Torah scholar, who knows that it is certainly tzaraat shall not make a clear ruling, saying, "A lesion has appeared to me," rather he should say, "<i>Something like a lesion has appeared to me</i>".</p>	<p>יד:לד ונתתי נגע צרעת: בשורה היא להם שהנגעים באים עליהם, לפי שהטמינו אמוריים מטמוניות של זהב בקירות בתייהם כל ארבעים שנה שהיו ישראל במדבר, ועל ידי הנגע נותן הבית ומוצאן: יד:לה כנגע נראה לי בבית: אפילו תלמיד חכם שיוודע שהוא נגע ודאי לא יפסוק דבר ברור לומר נגע נראה לי, אלא כנגע נראה לי:</p>

Aish Kodesh, *Metzora*¹

(on *Vayikra* 14:34 and *Rashi*)

Let us try to understand. If the plague is purely beneficial, why does the Torah (Leviticus 14:38–40) command that a house first be locked up for seven days, and only afterwards, if the leprous spot persists, are the stones of the wall removed and replaced? Surely, once the leprous mark becomes visible it should be obvious that treasure is buried there. This should be even more obvious when, as Nachmanides explains, and as is quoted in the holy writings of his holiness, my father, of blessed memory, (Divrei Elimelech, p. 275) the leprosy that affects houses and garments is an unnatural occurrence. If this was so, then the leprous plague existed only for the benefit of the Jewish people, in order to reveal the whereabouts of buried treasure. Why then does the Torah tell us that the house is tameh, ritually unclean for seven days?

We cannot conceive of what the Torah intends with its commandments, but it is possible that it hints the following: We know and have faith that everything God does to us—even when, God forbid, He is punishing us—is for the good. There are times, however, when we are smitten not only with physical suffering but also with things that, God forbid, distance us from Him, blessed be He. There is no cheder (schoolroom) for our children, no yeshiva, no synagogue in which to pray with a minyan (quorum), no mikveh (ritual bath), and so forth. In times such as this, God forbid, uneasy doubts may arise within us, asking how it is possible that even now God's intention is for our benefit. If it were for the good, surely He would be punishing us with things that draw us closer to Him, and not with the annihilation of Torah and prayer and, God forbid, the end of almost all the Torah. Is it possible that this is the kind of suffering about which it is written (Deut. 29:27), "God drove them from their land with anger, rage, and great fury, and He exiled them to another land, where they remain even today"?

Therefore, it is explicitly taught in the Torah that even though the leprous mark on the houses was tameh (unclean) and could make people tameh, God still made of it an instrument for the good of the Jewish people. First it was tameh for seven days, and only then was the treasure revealed. And so the law states: A person must say, "It looks to me as if there is [something] like a [leprous] mark in the house." (Leviticus 14:35) Even if he is a scholar and knows the exact definition of a leprous mark, he must still use the phrase "like a leprous mark."—for, as we said above, a person is never able to tell whether what is happening to him is a curse or an event. All he can say is that it looks like a curse. The truth however, as the Torah announces, is that what God is doing with us is for the good of Israel."

Rav Tamir Granot, *Dealing with the Suffering of the Holocaust: The Teachings of the "Esh Kodesh"*

The Master of the universe does not ignore the suffering of *Am Yisrael*. He weeps together with us. The faith and continuous sense of God's closeness – "there is no place that is devoid of Him" – means that God is with us literally. Hence, our weeping is not something external to God; rather, He joins in it. It is possible to hear the silent, inner weeping of the Divine Presence that joins with the weeping of *Am Yisrael* and the weeping of each and every individual Jew. This joint weeping creates a renewed intimacy with God – the sort of intimacy that sometimes develops between people who reveal their shared suffering to each other. And if this gives rise to prayer or Torah, then it is not Torah that is extraneous to the suffering, but rather Torah that is born of that suffering; not only is it not alienated from it, but it has the power to comfort and console: And then [the Piaseczno Rebbe] answers himself, "But I am so broken. I have cried so much, my whole life is fraught with grief and dejection." He is lost inside his

¹ Translation from: Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira & Hershy J. Worch. "Sacred Fire." Apple Books.
<https://books.apple.com/us/book/sacred-fire/id529810741>

introspective, self-analytical confusion. But [as the Piaseczno teaches, God] is crying within the inner chambers, and whoever presses himself close to God through Torah is able to weep there together with God, and also to learn Torah with Him. This is the difference. The pain and grief that one suffers over his own situation, alone in isolation, can break a person. He may even fall so far that he becomes immobilized by it. But the crying that a person does together with God makes him strong. He cries and takes strength. He is shattered, and then emboldened to study and to worship (p.316). God's "inner sanctuaries" are not in the heavens. They are the recesses of the soul, of man's innermost existence. Submission to suffering happens in the outer sanctuaries – in the world of "*asiya*" – the tangible, objective world. But when the soul finds the strength to look beyond the suffering, or when it looks inward to that deep place within the sorrow that is not embittered or despairing towards life but rather a genuine sorrow over its situation, over the situation of the Divine Presence, over the absurdity of existence – then it encounters the "inner sanctuary," and there it discovers that its weeping is not alone.