



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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Strengthen The Bond

אדם כִּי־הָיָה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאת אוֹר־סַפְחַת אוֹ בַּהֲרַת וְהָיָה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ לְנֹגַע צָרַעַת וְהוּבֵא אֶל־אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ אֶל־אֶחָד מִבְּנָיֹו הַכֹּהֲנִים: (ויקרא יג:ב)

If a man has a se'it, a sappachat, or a baheret on the skin of his flesh, and it forms a lesion of tzaraat on the skin of his flesh, he shall be brought to Aaron the kohen, or to one of his sons, the kohanim. (Vayikra 13:2)

In this week's parsha we are informed of the halachot that relate to the infliction of Tzaraat. For lack of a better translation, we will refer to Tzaraat as leprosy (although it is likely not what we define as leprosy today). The Gemara in Aruchin 15: explains that one is inflicted with tzaraat due to having engaged in the transgression of לשון הרע – badmouthing another.

In the Sefer L'hitaneg an insightful question is raised. Why is it that such a severe

punishment for slandering another is applied to a Jew, but not a non-Jew? There are seven mitzvot that apply to Bnei Noach and lashon hara is not one of them.

STRENGTHEN THE BOND

What is unique with respect to Am Yisrael, is that we are viewed as one unit. כל ישראל – each individual is responsible for each other, like a guarantor. When someone slanders another, it breaks that connection. Our entire essence is our unity. When that bond is broken, it affects the very character and nature of our nation. That is why one who causes a rift among Jews is inflicted with tzaraat and is exiled from the community. The one who causes the break in the glue that holds us together is excommunicated.

The Jewish nation is referred to as אדם, while other nations are referred to as אנשים. We are one – so we are referred to in the singular as אדם. Other nations lack that unity and are a collection of individuals – אנשים.

SHUN EVIL AND DO GOOD

There is a famous passage in *Midrash Rabba* that relates to *lashon hara*, one of the causes of *tzaraat*. It discusses a peddler who was traveling from place to place in the area of Tzipori, calling out, "Who wants to buy the elixir of life?" Rather than offer a prescription in a bottle the peddler explained that the secret lies in the following pasuk: מִי הָאִישׁ הַחֲפֵץ חַיִּים אֲהֵב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב נָצַר לְשׁוֹנֵךְ מֵרַע וּשְׂפָתָיֶךָ מִדְּבַר מְרֻמָּה סוּר מֵרַע וּגְעִישָׁה טוֹב בְּקֶשׁ שְׁלוֹם וְרַדְפֵהוּ" (תהילים לד: יג-טו)



Who is the man who desires life, who loves days to see goodness? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceitfully. Shun evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. (Tehillim 34: 13-15).

The Ktav Sofer explains that after the pasuk states that one should guard his tongue from speaking badly, it ends with “*bakesh shalom*” – “seek peace.” Once a person is told, “guard your tongue,” then obviously, he should seek peace. Why are these extra words necessary? It is not enough for a person to refrain from speaking badly. We must also try our best to foster peace among others. If I hear two people speaking *lashon hara*, I have to try to stop them. It is not enough to worry just about myself. I have to be like Aharon, who loved and pursued peace, who actively sought to resolve disputes among the people.

During the challenging times that we are experiencing we have seen so many people sacrifice their lives on behalf of Am Yisrael. So many people who stepped up and volunteered and performed incredible acts of chesed for families that were evacuated from their homes and soldiers that were injured. מי כעמך ישראל! It is not enough to simply refrain from harming another, we should actively engage in assisting others.

May we be able to strengthen our bond – set aside our different hashkafot and truly unite. If we are inflicted when we sever our connection, we are also rewarded when we bolster our relationship. ■

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