

# פרשת תזריע מצורע

גליון 23

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## עבירה big

The פרשת at the beginning of מצורע teaches, צרעת comes because of the עבירות a person does with his דיבור, his speech, "זאת תורת המצורע" (י"ד, ב'), explains the מצורע, שם, "זאת תורת המוציא שם, מצורע" *one who speaks evil against his friend.*

The מצורע continues: It is sated five times in the פסוקים the word תורה נגע: זאת תורה צרעת, זאת תהיה תורת המצורע, זאת התורה אשר בו נגע צרעת, זאת התורה לכל נגע הצרעת, זאת תורת המצורע "ללמדך שכל האומר

"מי האיש החפץ חיים וגו', נצור לשונך מרע'."  
*"Who is the man who desires life...? Guard your tongue from evil*

לשון הרע עובר על חמשה חומשי תורה, *this is to teach you that one who speaks לשון הרע, he is עובר on the entire תורה.*

An extremely powerful מצורע, one who speaks הרע is עובר on כלה תורה! לשון הרע is clearly one of the greatest עבירות. What's *taka* the פשט? Why is such an עון חמור מאד לשון הרע?

From the עונש of the מצורע and the way חז"ל describe it, we see the severity

of this sin. מפוזר, ראשו פרוע – he must tear his clothes, ועל שפם יעטה – he must be completely covered. In fact, חז"ל tell us, the צרעת wasn't just a white spot, it was actually a מחלה, it was an illness, as the מצורע writes, "אבריו מתאבלים" – limbs could fall off a person because of צרעת.

Then, the מצורע must scream out warning anyone passing by, "טמא טמא" – *I am impure, I am impure!* He undergoes tremendous embarrassment and

בזיונות, as the פסוק tells us, "ובדד ישב" – he must sit alone, outside the

camp all by himself.

The מצורע continues, אם המצורע יודע, לחרוז התורה כספיר ומרגליות כמו בן עזאי, *Even if the מצורע was a חכם who could expound in the תורה like בן עזאי*, הקב"ה, "אין הקב"ה חפץ בתורתו", תורה, nevertheless does not want his תורה, "ובדד ישב" – he sits alone, away from הקב"ה, הקב"ה no longer wants to hear his תורה. With this the מצורע explains another

understanding in the words, "ועל שפם" "ועל שפם", *keep your mouth shut*, "ועל שפם" tells him, *I don't want to have anything to do with you.*

What's the פשט? Why is לשון הרע such an עון חמור? Regarding no other עבירה do we find that a person goes through such a painful and embarrassing punishment? Why is לשון הרע such a serious עבירה?

### ***Love your friend***

I once saw a *gevaldiga* פשט in the ספר מאור שבתורה, and through saying over this פשט, this can be an inspiration for us, something for us to be aware about throughout our day.

The גמרא in (ל"א.) tells us about a person who came before בית הלל asking to be taught the תורה on one foot. בית הלל told him, "דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד", *Love your friend like yourself – don't to him what you don't like*, כל התורה "זו היא כל התורה – כולה" "this is the יסוד, the foundation of תורה הקדושה, love your friend like yourself.

The מצוה of (י"ט, י"ח) (קדושים י"ט, י"ח) "ואהבת לרעך" is one of the מצוות התורה, as the רמב"ם (הלכות דעות פ"ו הל"ג) writes, "מצוה" על כל אדם לאהוב כל אחד ואחד מישראל כגופו, "ואהבת לרעך כמוך". *There is a commandment of every single person to*

*love everyone from כלל ישראל like a person loves himself.*

There is a מצוה on us to love every single אי, and it makes no difference which country he comes from, which town he comes from or which מוסד he comes from, it makes no difference, you have to love every single person, there's no certificates for exemptions, every person has this מצוה.

And as we all ask: But what should I do?! I don't love him! I don't like him! How am I supposed to like him when I don't like him? What can I do, I פשוט don't like the guy?!

### ***Look for the good***

Explains the רמב"ם: The way to get yourself to like somebody, "לפיכך צריך" "לספר בשבחיו", say good things about the person, look for the persons good points, because every single person has מעלות, every single person has good qualities, qualities which can be praised and qualities which can be admired. Every single person has good points, so go out and look for those good points and speak about them. This will ultimately then bring a person to "ואהבת לרעך כמוך", because if you speak about a person's good points and try to look for a persons

מעלות, that is a way in instilling a love toward every person. By speaking nicely about people one is מקיים the מצוה of כל התורה כולה of יסוד, ואהבת לרעך כמוך. Whereas, speaking badly about others obviously then undermines the יסוד of כל התורה כולה.

Therefore, a person who speaks הרע לשון is עובר on one of the most חמורות עוונות, because by speaking הרע לשון one is going against and one is undermining the entire foundation of the תורה, he's demeaning the "ואהבת לרעך" כמוך, he's ignoring the גדול בתורה, עובר על כל חמשה חומשי תורה.

And as the ערכין (ט"ז:) in גמרא teaches that this is part of the מדה כנגד מדה which the רבש"ע treats us with, because every spoken לשון הרע creates a פירוד – it creates a separation between one איד and another איד – it breaks the אהבת לרעך כמוך, so therefore, מדה כנגד מדה, the תורה tells the מצורע, "ובדד ישב" – when you're making פירוד, פירוד הקב"ה will make פירוד to you, He won't engage with you, you will sit alone all by yourself.

### ***Go to the right department***

When a person sees a נגע on his flesh he goes to the כהן. Why's he going to the כהן, shouldn't he be going to a doctor?

The (מצוה קס"ט) חינוך explains: The reason a person goes to the כהן is because the כהן is the one who a person takes his עברות to. This will awaken a person with thoughts of תשובה, he goes to a place where a person goes to when he has done עבירות.

The חינוך also explains: We therefore lock him up for seven days, give him plenty of time to think about what he has done and where he has gone wrong.

We must constantly remind ourselves about the importance to learn הלכות every single day, and not just to learn it, but to actually internalise each part of it.

### ***Now you can speak!***

After the ספר brought out his חפץ חיים on one of his travels who exclaimed, “Rebbe, I’m not מוחל you... You brought out a ספר on שמירת הלשון and I simply can’t speak anymore, how can I continue to socialize? How do I schmooze? How do I stay up at night? I have nothing to say!” The חפץ חיים remarked, “You think because of my ספר you can’t speak?! Just the opposite, because of my ספר now you can speak, now you know what you can and what you can’t say!...”

ל tell us, "החיים והמות ביד הלשון", *Life and death is within the hands of one's speech*, the mouth has the power to kill and to make life. The ספרים therefore explain that this is the reason the מצורע brings two ציפורים where one you kill and one you keep alive, to be מרמז to this important message, החיים והמות ביד הלשון, the mouth can do both, life and death, speech can kill.

### ***The potion of life***

The מדרשים famously bring the story about a peddler who would make his rounds of the towns near ציפורי. He would announce, "Who wishes to purchase a potion of life?" As a crowd gathered around the peddler – who wouldn't want a potion for life, ר' ינאי was sitting in his study expounding the תורה. When he heard the announcement, he called to the peddler, "Come here and sell it to me." The peddler replied, "Neither you nor those like you need it." However, ר' ינאי was persistent until the peddler finally came into him. The peddler withdrew a ספר תהלים and showed ר' ינאי "מי האיש החפץ, פסוק ר' ינאי חיים וגו', נצור לשונך מרע, סור מרע ועשה טוב וגו'." *"Who is the man who desires life...? What follows? "Guard your tongue from evil, turn from evil and do good..."* ר' ינאי replied, "שלמה המלך"

declared as well, *'One who guards his mouth and tongue, guards his soul from tribulations.'* ר' ינאי concluded: "All my life I read this פסוק and I did not perceive its simple intent until this peddler came and made it known."

ר' ינאי was ממש impressed. But what was the big חידוש here? Didn't ר' ינאי know a simple פסוק in תהלים, *whoever wants life should guard his tongue?*

### ***He's in front of you***

ר' ירוחם זצ"ל gives a gevaldiga עצה to how a person can stop himself from speaking הרע: Whenever you feel the desire in speaking הרע about somebody, imagine the person standing next to you crying and screaming, "Please please please don't say it! Please don't embarrass me like this!"

### ***Where's everything??***

Another עצה which can help us stop speaking הרע is taught by the חובת א: פחד נורא, הלבבות (שער הכניעה פ"ז) A persons comes to שמים after 120, and the בית דין של מעלה put out his files of his actions of life, his מצוות and עבירות. "I'm sorry," a person will say, "I thought only on planet earth computers malfunction, but there's a mistake here, these are not my מצוות and these are not my עבירות?!"



have gone and why he has so many עבירות, he has no idea who he is. When they ask you for your name you won't remember it, you won't recognise yourself, you won't recognise your נשמה, you will look at yourself like 100 puzzles mixed together.

### ***An exception to the rule***

So what's *taka* the פשט? We don't find regarding any other עבירה which has such side effects. No other עבירה in בין מצוות אדם לחבירו makes a person lose his מצוות and receive *yena's* עבירות! What's פשט in the extreme severity?

In fact, the ספרים הקדושים especially the Steipler זצ"ל, write in length that however many עבירות we have done and however low we have fallen, we still hold onto our מצוות, we don't lose our מצוות, our מצוות are still מצוות, and each מצוה can still give us tremendous שכר even if a person does not do תשובה. Every מצוה, every word of תורה, every חסד and every nice word remains with a person even though he has been עובר on עוונות חמורות שבתורה.

However, suddenly, when we come to לשון הרע, it all goes away, the מצוות are lost. What's פשט – how can we explain this עון חמור עד מאד?

### ***What a life!***

Explains the מאור שבתורה: When you speak לשון הרע about somebody, you are minimizing his כבוד, you are humiliating his respect and honour. מדה כנגד מדה, *measure for measure*, הקב"ה takes away your כבוד, your eternal כבוד of מצוות in עולם הבא.

Often, we may think to ourselves, "Wow! *Noch-a-mazle* I don't live in the times of the המקדש! If I would, I would always be חוץ למחנה, every few days I speak לשון הרע, I'll always be outside..."

A person then may think to himself, "Actually it might not be so bad, I won't be the only one there, I'll have company חוץ למחנה, I'm not the only one speaking לשון הרע..."

But למעשה a person then looks into the הלכות of a מצורע and learns that every מצורע outside the camp must actually sit alone without interacting and having any connection with the other מצורע's חוץ למחנה.

לשון הרע and ברוך השם, today I can speak לשון הרע and wake up the next morning with no white spots, I can wake up without נאי בזיונות

– without the whole town knowing I spoke לשון הרע.”

The מצורע and בושה was unthinkable, he would scream "טמא" "טמא, everyone would run away from him, he's alone outside the מחנה.

This tremendous מגרע was then his עבירה which was then a כפרה for his לשון הרע by belittling somebody else's כבוד.

However, today that there is no דיני מצורע, we're much worst off, we're lacking this כפרה, this atonement which will take away our כבוד.

### ***The real כבוד***

How then does הקב"ה take away our כבוד? He takes away our מצוות, He takes away our greatest כבוד we can ever receive. We're worse off forever, לנצח ונצחים. According to the amount of honour we made yena lose, that is the amount of כבוד in עולם הבא we will lose.

Whereas a מצורע can eventually get back on his own feet, eventually people will forget, it may take some time, but one day he will get back to normal.

It's a פחד, it's scary to think about it. When we speak לשון הרע and even after doing תשובה, but the כבוד is still lacking, you've destroyed and diminished

somebody else's כבוד. The only way to then get your מצוות back is to go and replace – refill yena's כבוד. We don't get back our מצוות until we have restored his original כבוד. If we speak לשון הרע about somebody, go and restore his כבוד, speak nicely about him, give him his honour, give him respect.

### ***The blood is still flying***

The תורה tells us, "וטבל אותם ואת הציפור החיה בדם... ושלה את הציפור על פני השדה." (י"ד, ז'), *He shall dip the live bird into blood... and he shall set the live bird free upon the field.* We dip the bird into blood and then send it off to fly, splashing and dripping the blood all over the place. What's פשט? We don't do such a procedure anywhere else in the תורה, what is the message the תורה is giving us here?

I once heard a beautiful פשט from ר' שמעון הירשלער שליט"א: After a person has had his כפרה, he's caught a מחלה, he's been locked up, he's been outside the מחנה, he's been through a נורא, he's finally brought his two birds, finally he can breathe a sigh of relief. No! Says the תורה, "Yena's blood is still flying around..."

That's the message, you spilled *yena's* blood. If you want to get back onto track, make sure you go and restore his blood, restore his כבוד, his blood is still flying around.

### ***A life of eternity***

The גמרא in קידושין tells us that when the פסוק writes "חיים" – it refers to חיים in עולם הבא. Although many מדרשים tell us that "מי האיש החפץ חיים... נצור לשונך מרע" refers to חיים in עולם הזה, however, it also refers to חיים בעולם הבא, life for the world to come.

Perhaps, this was the חידוש and insight which ר' ינאי received from that peddler in ציפורי. מי suddenly chapped, ר' ינאי. ציפורי " – האיש החפץ חיים?! " You want life in the next world? You want your מצוות to remain in the next world נצחים?! Then make sure, נצור לשונך מרע, guard your mouth from speaking הרע, otherwise you will be losing out on your חיים בעולם הבא, a חיים of נצחיות, a חיים of eternity.

### ***It's not easy work***

ר' נחום טשרנובל זצ"ל would say over a *gevaldiga vort*: The frogs in מצרים which jumped into the fire were not rewarded, whereas, the dogs which didn't bark – מצרים left אידן when they kept quiet

they were rewarded with receiving נבילות and טריפות.

Why weren't the frogs rewarded for jumping in the fire?

ר' נחום זצ"ל would say, "It's easier to jump into a fire than to keep quiet."

Keeping quiet is a tremendous נסיון, it's a constant challenge, it's easier to jump into a flaming oven than to keep your mouth shut.

It's a נסיון which we must work on constantly, if we don't start working on it, we won't get anywhere. We must work on it especially בימי הספירה, a time to increase our מידות טובות and polish up our בין אדם לחבירו.

A start and the first step to stop speaking הרע, לשון הרע, is by learning two הלכות of שמירת הלשון every single day, every day we need a boost and inspiration about לשון הרע of ענין.

### ***A different name***

An old man – a man nearly one hundred years old, once came before Steipler זצ"ל and wrote his name down on a paper in front of the Steipler, *Yankel...*

The Steipler – בעל רוח הקודש said to him, "Isn't your name ראוּבֵן?"

"No," the old man replied, "My name is Yankel!"



"Are you sure your name is not ראוּבֵן?" asked the Steipler, "Or perhaps to you recall anything in your life having anything to do with someone called ראוּבֵן?"

After thinking for a few moments, the old man replied, "Actually I did have an experience in my life with somebody called ראוּבֵן. About forty years I travelled to America to collect funds to marry off my daughter. I knocked onto the first house to ask for a donation and the fellow started screaming at me, "You גַּנֵּב! You thief! You're a swindler..." He מִמְשָׁם embarrassed me, made me feel like a real... And this was only the start, when I then went to מַעְרִיב, this fellow warned the עוֹלָם not to give me any money, claiming I was a גַּנֵּב and a thief. I went through true בְּזִיוּנוֹת.

The next morning I came to שְׁחֵרִית and I saw the signs about a לִוְיָהּ happening that day, *nebech*, this fellow who embarrassed me the night before didn't wake up that morning.

That's the שְׁיִיכוֹת I had to somebody called ראוּבֵן," the old man concluded.

Said the Steipler לְזַ"ל, "Because he was מְבֹזָה you in such a way, his years were taken away from him and given to you,

and that is why you have been זוֹכֵה to such אַרְיִכוֹת יָמִים."

### *Constant messages*

The פְּסוּקָה tells us, "וּבֹשֶׁר כִּי יִהְיֶה בּוֹ בְעֵרוֹ שְׁחִין וְנִרְפָּא, וְהָיָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַשְּׁחִין שָׂאת לְבִנְהָ" (י"ג, י"ה), *And on the place of the inflammation there will be a white*

שָׂאת. First came a boil and then a צָרַעַת came afterwards on that very place. הַקֶּב"ה first sent a burn, He first sent a boil, and if a person would internalise the message straight away, he wouldn't get צָרַעַת.

רֵאשׁוֹנוֹיִם brings from the ר' שִׁמְחָה זִיסֵל זצ"ל: Even though today we no longer have צָרַעַת, but a burn and the שְׁחִין and any other bang or pain we get on our גּוּף is a message from שָׁמַיִם! When a person bangs himself or when a person hurts himself, he must realise that this is a direct reminder from הַקֶּב"ה, possibly reminding a person about the עֲבִירָה of לְשׁוֹן הָרַע. Why did I get this burn? Why did I get this boil?

It's a message from הַקֶּב"ה.

This is one of the greatest נְסִיווֹנוֹת we deal with every day, we have no idea what damage we can cause to ourselves with speaking לְשׁוֹן הָרַע.

We must work on ourselves by looking at other people's good points because

every person has good qualities, and  
every person has their unique מעלות.  
Speak about other people's good points,  
speak nicely about others, "לפיכך צריך  
"לספר בשבחיו".

מחזק ענין is לשון הרע which we must be  
ourselves with constantly.



Transcribed by Avrohom Dov Kohn – אברהם דוב הכהן כהן

All mistakes, omissions and errors are mine.