

## Parashat Tazria

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרֶיעַ וְיָלְדָה  
זָכָר וְטָמְאָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כִּימֵי נְדַת דְּוֹתָהּ תִּטְמָא. וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל בְּשָׂר  
עָרְלָתוֹ.

*G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the Israelites, saying: 'If a woman conceives, and gives birth to a son, she shall be impure for seven days; she shall be impure as she is in the days of her menstrual period. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.'"*<sup>1</sup>

*Parashat Tazria* begins with three seemingly unrelated topics: the ritual impurity acquired by a woman through giving birth, the commandment to circumcise infant boys on the eighth day of their life, and the ritual impurity imparted by the condition known as *tzara'at*. (The latter term is usually incorrectly translated as "leprosy," but in fact refers to a unique disease that existed only when the Temple stood and bears only the slightest resemblance to what we know today as leprosy.) Since the order of topics in the Torah is significant, the juxtaposition of these three topics begs for explanation.

It is worth mentioning that both these types of impurity, as well as menstrual impurity, which will also come under discussion, are purely spiritual conditions, and must not be confused with medical or hygienic conditions. Although spiritual impurity (*tumah*) may be brought about by physical conditions and has physical repercussions, it is more a psychological malaise than a physical one. The ritually impure person typically suffers from some kind of mental association with death, depression, ego, or other condition that is antithetical to the joyful optimism characteristic of healthy spirituality. In order to resume a life of active spirituality, he must be "purified" from this mentality. This will be evident in the course of the Arizal's discussion.

In the passage before us, the Arizal will explain why these three seemingly unrelated topics are discussed in succession. As is typical in classic homiletic style, he begins by presenting a list of questions, proceeds to discourse on theological doctrine, and ties everything together, resolving the original difficulties, at the end.

ספר הלקוטים, פרשת תזריע  
ויש לדקדק באומרו לאמר שני פעמים, והיה די באחת. ועוד סמיכות מצות מילה לטומאת הנידה ולנגע צרעת,  
מה קשר ושייכות יש זה עם זה, ועוד אומר למטה

*Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Tazria*

**It is worth examining why the Torah states "saying" twice in this passage, when once would have sufficed. We must also address why the commandment of circumcision is mentioned in the context of menstrual impurity and the impurity incurred through *tzara'at*; what do they have in common? Furthermore, the Torah continues:**

אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת או ספחת או בהרת והיה בעור בשרו לנגע צרעת,

1. Leviticus 12:1-3.

**“When a man has in the skin of his flesh a swelling, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh the plague of *tzara’at*...”<sup>2</sup>**

נראה שאין זה סדר נכון, וכך היל"ל אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו נגע צרעת שאת או ספחת או בהרת.

**The words in this verse appear to be out of order; it should have said: “When a man has in the flesh of his skin the plague of *tzara’at*, as a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot...”**

אמנם יובן ע"ד מ"ש ר"ל שבעון שעברה חוה על צווי השי"ת נתקללה בדם הנדה ובדם בתולים, כמו שדרשו על הרבה ארבה.

**All the above will be understood based on our sages' statement that in consequence of disobeying G-d's command, Eve was made to undergo the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginal marital relations.<sup>3</sup> They inferred this double bleeding from the double expression, “I will increase greatly your suffering...”<sup>4</sup>**

As originally created, the physiology of woman was such that she did not have a menstrual cycle, and the process of conceiving and giving birth did not involve any bleeding. Nor did she bleed when she first engaged in marital relations. These (as well as other) facets of life were introduced into reality as the result of the primordial sin. In other words, in order to rectify the faulty way of thinking or looking at life that led Adam and Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit, certain physical changes occurred in reality, among them the menstrual cycle and virginal bleeding. By experiencing and properly dealing with these phenomena, mankind should ideally undergo a spiritual maturation process that will eventually lead to the final Redemption. At that time, these conditions of fallen reality will no longer be necessary, and life (including woman's physiology) will revert to its Edenic state.

וזהו שיעור הכתוב

**This, then, is the explanation of the opening verse:**

וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, כלומר על אמירה שאני צריך לומר לך על הנדה והלידה, ואם יאמר נא ישראל מאין באה טומאת הנדה לבנות ישראל הקדושים, לזה אמר דבר אל בני ישראל וכו', כלומר בשביל אותה אמירה שאמרתי לחוה ועברה עליה, נענשה בטומאת הנדה, לזה וטמאה שבעת ימים כימי נדת דוותה תטמא:

**“And G-d spoke to Moses, saying”—that is, “concerning what I am about to say to you about menstrual and virginal bleeding. If the Jewish people ask you why they have to be defiled by menstrual bleeding, seeing that they are a holy people, then: *Speak to the Israelites, saying.*” That is, “Tell them that it is because Eve transgressed what I told her to do, she was made to suffer the impurity of menstruation. For this reason, *if a woman conceives, and gives birth to a son, she shall be impure for seven days; she shall be impure as she is in the days of her menstrual period.*”**

So far, the Arizal has answered his first question, namely, why the repetition of the word “saying” in the opening verse. The first refers to G-d addressing Moses with the commandments concerning

2. Ibid. 13:2.

3. *Eiruvin* 100b.

4. Genesis 3:16.

childbirth, and the second is the answer to the Jewish people's potential question as to the reason for these commandments. They are the consequence of another "saying," G-d's commandment to Adam and Eve.

ונסמכה המילה לנדה, שע"י המילה ימנע מליטמא עם הנדה, ולזה ציוה השי"ת לנו על המילה למול הקטן בן ח' ימים, שע"כ מתישין כח הטומאה ויסור התאווה.

**The commandment of circumcision is mentioned in connection with the impurity of menstruation, since by being circumcised, a person will be kept from being defiled with the impurity of menstruation. This is why G-d commanded us to circumcise baby boys when they are eight days old, for through this we weaken the power of impurity and eliminate evil lust.**

The foreskin of the male reproductive organ effects his experience of marital relations in two ways: it increases his gross sensual pleasure and decreases his sensitivity to his wife by insulating him from her to a certain extent. By removing the foreskin, the experience of marital relations becomes for the man less of a narcissistic indulgence and more of a true spiritual coupling between him and his wife. Once the spiritual dimension of marital relations is allowed into the picture, it enhances the physical dimension as well. The sages of the Talmud therefore state that ideally, at least, it is the Jewish couple that experiences the truest enjoyment in marital relations.

During the wife's menstrual period, she is too self-aware and self-conscious to engage in marital relations with the proper spiritual orientation. The Torah thus forbids marital relations during this period. When a man has been circumcised of his gross sensual approach to marital relations, he retains more control over his sexual passion, and is thus less likely to succumb to them. His circumcision thus helps him not engage in forbidden marital relations, including relations with his wife during her period.

ועוד להורות שהוא עבד השי"ת חתום בחותמו, ולא יעבור על צויו,

**Furthermore, circumcision indicates that man is the servant of G-d, stamped with His seal. As such, he will certainly not transgress his Master's command.**

The Torah refers to circumcision as the "sign" of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people. The Jewish is thus "branded" as G-d's servant, and this awareness serves to remind him that he is responsible to a higher authority.

ולזה ניתנה מצות המילה באמצע בין ציווי הנדה ובין צווי הצרעת, שע"י המילה ינצל מזה ומזה מלישכב עם נדה, וגם להיות עניו ושפל רוח, כעבד חתום בחותם אדוניו, ויברח מן הגאווה:

**Therefore the commandment of circumcision was placed between the commandments concerning menstrual impurity and the impurity induced by *tzara'at*, for circumcision protects him from both. He will not engage in sexual relations with a menstruating woman, and will also remain humble and of lowly spirit, like a servant stamped with the seal of his master, thus shunning haughtiness.**

As the Arizal will explain presently, haughtiness is the root of the impurity of *tzara'at*. He has now answered the question as to why the commandment of circumcision is placed between the commandments of menstrual impurity and *tzara'at*.

ולפי שהגאווה מתחלקת לג' מינים, יש מי שגאותו בלבו ולפני הכל נראה כעניו, ועיי' נאמר אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת, כלומר שהגאווה תקועה בעור בשרו ואינה ניכרת לכל, והיא שאת בינו ובין עצמו.

**There are three types of haughtiness: One type of person is haughty in his heart and appears to be humble to everyone else. About this type of person, the Torah says, "When a man has in the skin of his flesh a swelling." That is, his haughtiness ("swelling") is concealed deep within the skin of his flesh and is not apparent to everyone. It is a private sort of egocentricity.**

ומין שני, והוא שמתגאה על הדומים לו, ולא על מי שגדול ממנו בחכמה ובמנין, וזהו הספחת, מלשון ספחני נא שהיא מלשון חיבור.

**A second type of haughtiness is that in which a person feels superior to those like him, but not to those who exceed him in wisdom or stature. This type of haughtiness is called "a scab." The Hebrew word for "scab" (*sapachat*) means a connected addition, as in the verse, "Assign me (*sapcheini*), please, to one of the priestly duties,"<sup>5</sup> in the sense of "joining" and "connection." It thus refers to someone who feels superior only to those of his own caliber.**

ומין שלישי היא יותר חולה, והיא בהרת, והוא המתגאה אפילו על מי שהוא גדול ממנו בחכמה ובמנין והעושר, שמעיו פניו כנגד הכל, וזהו בהרת עזה.

**The third type of haughtiness is more serious and therefore requires a lengthier process of purification. This is the "bright spot," meaning that the person feels and acts superior even to those who exceed him in wisdom, stature, or wealth. He acts impudently to all. This type of haughtiness is therefore alluded to by the strong, bright spot.**

ושלש אלה שנה השם, ושלשתם לוקים בצרעת, ואפילו מין האי שהוא קל מן הכל, שהוא מתגאה בינו לבין עצמו, לזה חזר ואמר הכתוב והיה לנגע צרעת בעור בשרו, אפילו שהוא כמוסה מעין כל, עכ"ז יענש, כ"ש החלוקות השתים שהם יותר גרועות:

**G-d detests all three of these, and all three are made to suffer the impurity of *tzara'at*, even the first, which is the most innocuous of the three in that he is only haughty inwardly. This is why the Torah repeats the phrase "in the skin of his flesh," to intimate that he is considered plagued with this impurity even if it is hidden from public sight, and that he will be duly punished. Even more so, of course, is this the case with the other two types of haughtiness, which are more heinous.**

The Arizal has now answered his third question, regarding the order of the words in the verse about *tzara'at*. He now briefly discusses the problem of haughtiness in general.

והנה מצינו שאפילו השי"ת שונא הגאווה, שכן כתיב ה' מלך גאות לבש, שהגאווה היא בערך מלבוש אצלו, שבמלכותו לובש הגאווה לאיים, ותכף ומיד פושטו, כמ"ש ז"ל כל מקום שאתה מוצא גדולתו ית' שם אתה מוצא ענותנותו כו'.

5. 1 Samuel 2:36.

As mentioned, haughtiness is such a severe blot on a person's personality that even G-d Himself hates it. Thus, it is written, "G-d reigns, He is robed in haughtiness."<sup>6</sup> That is, haughtiness is spoken of here as a mere article of clothing that G-d dons in ruling the world in order to instill fear in His creatures and then immediately takes off. Thus our sages state, "Whenever you find mention in the Bible of G-d's greatness, you find immediate mention of His humility."<sup>7</sup>

ובזה יובנו הכתובים על נכון.

With the above explanation, we may now understand the verses quoted properly.

## 2

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וְיָלְדָה זָכָר וְטָמְאָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כִּימֵי נִדַת דְּוֹתָהּ תִּטְמָא. וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל בְּשָׂר עֶרְלָתוֹ.

*G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the Israelites, saying: "If a woman conceives, and gives birth to a son, she shall be impure for seven days; she shall be impure as she is in the days of her menstrual period. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."<sup>8</sup>*

ספר הלכותים, פרשת תזריע

דע, כי ענין השלת הזוהמא בהוה גרם זה.

*Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Tazria*

**Know that this, i.e., a woman's defilement for seven days when giving birth to a son, was caused by the injection of the snake's poison into Eve.**

Although the text of the Bible only says that the snake spoke to Eve, it is explained in the oral tradition that the snake actually had intercourse with her.<sup>9</sup> The snake personified "evil," i.e., selfishness and self-centered ego, the antithesis of G-d-consciousness.

Of course, every individual has a unique Divine soul, which is meant to express itself as his/her unique "Divine personality," which means: the unique contribution or angle this person is meant to give to the world's understanding of G-d's presence in reality. This may express itself in many ways, from innovative understandings of the Torah, to artistic creativity, to acts of kindness and goodness, to inspiring others to lead holy lives, and so on. This is the person's unique, Divine "ego." Thus, ego *per se* is not necessarily a bad thing.

The problem is that this Divine ego is too often hidden by the alter-ego of the animal soul, which begins as the consciousness-of-self that a person must have in order to ensure that he will look out for his own physical needs, but quickly assumes complete control of the person's thoughts, making him selfish and self-oriented. In other words, if a child is not given proper spiritual education (a.k.a.

6. Psalms 93:1.

7. *Megilah* 31a.

8. Leviticus 12:1-3.

9. *Shabbat* 146a; Rashi (1<sup>st</sup> printing [1474]), on Genesis 3:14.

Torah-*chinuch*), which trains him to give precedence to his Divine soul, his animal soul will take over by default. This is so because the animal ego is given first control of the mind – for an infant needs first of all to learn how to take care of itself – and because society has a vested interest in training people to be good consumers, etc.

This inflated consciousness of self (i.e., inflated beyond the basic consciousness of self required for us to function physically) is defined as “evil,” inasmuch as it usurps the role intended for the Divine soul – that of determining the course the individual’s life should take and how he should utilize the resources G-d has granted him to accomplish his purpose on earth. It seeks to divert the individual’s attention from Divine matters – sometimes with material indulgence, sometimes with substitute forms of spirituality – in order to aggrandize his concern with and focus on himself. This subterfuge can express itself very refined ways, also, such as abstract intellectual or artistic pursuits, utopian pursuits, or even the pursuit of good deeds – if done as an escape from religious obligation or for non-altruistic motivation.

In most people, their conscious mind is a blend of mostly animal ego and some deep desires of the Divine soul seeking to surface. The result of this is that most secular human artistic (and even scientific) creation and innovation is largely an expression the basest human/animal drives, although, as we said, the element of the Divine soul seeking to penetrate this thick and heavy animal context is also present. The more one spiritualizes his life and – through learning Torah and doing *mitzvot* – gives his Divine self means for expression, the more his creativity will express true Divinity, and the more he will be sensitive to Divinity in general and thus be able to identify and focus on the Divine element in other people’s creative output.

This animal/subjective/selfish perspective on life was introduced to humanity by the snake, its primordial personification. By sexually injecting its psychological poison into Eve, the snake robbed Adam and Eve of their ability to selflessly see reality through G-d’s eyes, and made man the subjective, self-referencing creature he is today.

וזה בסיבת היות אדה"ר ממקום כפרתו נברא מן העפר, ולמה לא לקחו מג"ע, לפי שידע שיחטא, ואם היה מעפר הגן לא היה לו כפרה עולמית, אבל הכניסו לגן,

**This also explains why Adam was created from the dirt of the place of his atonement, and why this dirt was not taken from the Garden of Eden. For G-d knew that he would sin, and had he been created from the dirt of the Garden, there could never be any atonement for him. G-d therefore created Adam outside the garden and brought him into it afterwards.**

According to tradition, Adam was created on what would later be known as the Temple Mount, or Mount Moriah, specifically from the spot where the outer altar of Temple would later stand.<sup>10</sup> This fact signifies that man was created with the potential for repentance, i.e., the ability to restore his consciousness to its intended Divine orientation such that his true, individual, Divine ego can be revealed.

והוציאו בחטא הטלת הזוהמא, שהיא תערובת השבעים אומות עם ישראל בבטן חוה,

**G-d took Adam out of the garden when the sin he and Eve committed brought out the injection of the snake’s poison. This was the intermingling of the seventy gentile nations with Israel in Eve’s womb.**

Had the primordial sin not occurred, mankind would not have been divided into Jew and gentile;

10. *Bereishit Rabbah* 14:8.

Adam and his progeny would all have had the status now held only by the Jewish people. Once pure Divine consciousness—the original consciousness of Adam and Eve—had become diluted with self-consciousness, it became necessary to separate between the two. This, indeed, has been the task of mankind ever since its primordial fall, and this process will eventually end in the restoration of reality to its original spiritual state. As an essential facet of this process, G-d isolated the original kernel of Divine consciousness and passed it on, latently, through the line of Adam's seed that remained more-or-less true to its ideals. This continued until Abraham, who by his actions, faith, and—perhaps most importantly—his dedication to perpetuating his vision in his progeny—internalized this consciousness and made it such an essential part of his being that G-d chose him and his offspring to be its conscious bearers for the rest of humanity.

The gentile world is divided into seventy archetypal nations<sup>11</sup>; all present, future, and extinct nationalities, cultures, civilizations, etc., are derived from these seventy.

וְזוֹ הִיא שְׁפִירְסָה נִידָה בְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה יֵצֵא קִיץ שׁוֹפֵךְ דָּמִים, וְהַבֵּל נִשְׁפָּךְ דָּמוֹ, וּמִשָּׁם סִיבַת דַּם הַנְּדוּת לְאִשָּׁה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וְכִי וּטְמֵאָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים.

**This is why Eve menstruated at that moment, giving birth to Cain—who shed blood, and Abel—whose blood was shed. This is the origin of woman's menstrual blood, as it is written, "When a woman gives seed and gives birth to a boy, she shall be impure seven days; as in the days of her menstrual period shall she be impure."**<sup>12</sup>

The fact that the Torah compares impurity contracted by birth with impurity contracted by menstruation indicates that the two are thematically connected.

Menstruation causes the woman to focus on herself and her physical and emotional feelings. (This is why marital relations are forbidden during menstruation; the woman is too focused on herself to focus on her husband and/or their common soul.) The fact that this is so indicates that menstruation is spiritually the result of the introduction of self-awareness into humanity, which we have seen originated in the snake's injection of his physical/metaphysical "seed" into Eve. The laws of Family Purity are the Divinely directed way the menstrual experience can be transformed into what is meant to be: an educative process out of self-orientation.<sup>13</sup>

Bleeding at birth also began with the primordial sin; had Adam and Eve not sinned, childbirth would occur without bleeding (and this will be the case in the future).

וּסִיבַת הַטּוּמְאָה לְזָכָר שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, עַל סִיבַתָּהּ שֶׁמְזַרְעֵת תְּחִילָה אֹדָם אִם יוֹלֵדֶת זָכָר.

**This is also the reason she becomes impure for seven days when she gives birth to a boy, for when she contributes her redness first, the offspring is male.**

According to the Talmud,<sup>14</sup> "there are three participants in [the creation of] man: the Holy One, blessed be He, his father, and his mother. His father supplies the white substance, out of which are formed the child's bones, sinews, nails, the brain in his head, and the white in his eye; his mother supplies the red substance, out of which is formed his skin, flesh, hair, blood, and the black of his eye; and the Holy One, blessed be He, gives him the spirit, the soul, facial features, eyesight, hearing, speech, the ability to walk, understanding, and discernment."

Furthermore, we are taught that "when the wife gives her seed first, she will give birth to a male;

11. Listed in Genesis 10.

12. Leviticus 12:2.

13. As detailed in *The Mystery of Marriage*.

14. *Nidah* 31a.

when the husband gives his seed first, she will give birth to a female."<sup>15</sup>

We will not attempt here to align these two Talmudic statements *vis-à-vis* with our present-day understanding of physiology; this has been done elsewhere. For our purposes, these two statements taken together indicate that the birth of a boy indicates that the mother “gave seed” first, and that this “seed” was the “red substance,” which produces the blood. In general, it seems that the mother’s contribution is the more “female” aspects of human nature, which, as we have explained at length previously, is the drive to manifest Divinity in the world. The fact that the woman gave birth to a boy means that when the child was conceived her femininity took the leading role; her desire to express Divinity in the world produced a male, since males are obligated to fulfill more active *mitzvot* than are women.

גם יובן ארבע ערלות שיש באדם, ולמה לא נימול אלא מערלת הבשר. הסיבה, כי זה רומז לדי ערלות האילן, וערלת הבשר הוא מקום חטא האדם, ששם נרמז הטלת הזוהמא וסיבת הקרי הנקרא רע, מורכב מטוב ורע.

**With this we will also understand why, of the four “foreskins” of man, only that of his procreative organ is circumcised. The reason is because these four “foreskins” allude to the four years that a tree’s fruit is considered “foreskin.” The foreskin of the procreative organ is where Adam sinned, so it recalls the injection of the snake’s poison and sexual sin (*keri*), known as “evil”; this organ is thus compounded of good and evil.**

The Torah uses the expression “uncircumcised” of four human organs: the male procreative organ, the ears, the heart, and the mouth.<sup>16</sup> These organs are referred to as “uncircumcised” or as possessing a “foreskin” when the individual does not use them to be sensitive to others or to G-d.

When a tree is planted, we are forbidden to eat the fruit it produces during its first three years. This prohibition is called *orlah*, which is the word for “foreskin.”<sup>17</sup> Rashi explains that this is so because we are to treat the fruit as if it were blocked off from us by some type of foreskin.

The fruit the tree produces during the fourth year is to be taken to Jerusalem and eaten that year within the precincts of the holy city.<sup>18</sup>

In Kabbalah, it is explained that the tree’s fruit during its first three years “belongs” to the three realms of absolute evil (“shells,” *kelipot*) that cannot be elevated by human consumption; this why eating it is prohibited. The fruit of the fourth year comes from the realm of the “bright” or “translucent shell” (*kelipat nogah*), which is the realm of reality that includes all things that are neither intrinsically good nor intrinsically evil but rather assume the status of good or evil depending on how they are used. Whatever comes from this realm is neither forbidden by the Torah (for then it would be “evil”) nor expressly legislated (for then it would be a *mitzvah*), but simply permitted. This realm includes, for example, all *kosher* food and activities permitted by the Torah but not specifically required to be done. If we eat this food or do these acts for holy purposes, their status rises into the realm of holiness; if we eat it or do them for selfish or unholy purposes, their status descends into the realm of evil. The tree’s fourth-year fruit is not prohibited from consumption but must be eaten in the holy city; it must be elevated to holiness. It therefore expresses the moral dynamic of the fourth “shell.”

The heart, ears, and mouth, must be guarded scrupulously from any contact with evil; any “foreskin” on these organs—experience of insensitivity, selfhood and unrectified ego—is bad and must be

15. *Berachot* 60a.

16. See *Bereishit Rabbah* 46:5.

17. *Leviticus* 19:23.

18. *Ibid* 19:24; see Rashi *ad loc*.

rejected. With the sexual organ, however, the picture is not so black and white. A certain amount of self-awareness and self-orientation is necessary if marital relations are to occur. True, we are bidden to sanctify our sexuality as much as we can, but – in contrast to the other three organs – the sanctification process consists not of eliminating the animal awareness but refining it such that it serves as a window to our Divine soul. This is the paradox of marital relations: each partner is to focus on giving pleasure to the other, but in order for each partner to do this successfully, the other partner must oblige by experiencing his/her own pleasure. Thus, each partner experiences his/her own pleasure as a way of helping the other partner fulfill her/his objective of pleasing. Moreover, the greater my pleasure, the greater is my partner's success, and the greater his/her pleasure in having pleased me. It is thus ironically crucial to the selflessness of the act that each partner experience the greatest pleasure possible, although absolutely not for the sake of experiencing their own pleasure. Actively, I pursue my partner's pleasure; passively, I "pursue" my own. Marital relations are thus simultaneously consummately selfless and consummately self-fulfilling.

Obviously, sliding from experiencing pleasure for the partner into experiencing pleasure for oneself can happen very easily. Therefore, since some degree of self-awareness must remain in marital relations, the danger of falling into evil here is much greater. Sexuality, in this context, is thus the fourth "shell" that can go either way. Since its potential for evil is so much greater than that of the other three organs, only it requires actual physical circumcision. With the others, spiritual "circumcision," i.e., proper attitudes engendered by holy training, suffice.

וענין הקפאת הזרע בהתערב עם דם האודם מהמובחר, ומה שנשאר מהשמרים נשאר למזון הולד, ונרמז זה בפסוק הן בעון חוללתי ובחטא יחמתני אמי, עון, רמז לאב מהלובן, וחטא, רמז לאם לאודם. וענין פסוקי איוב הלא כחלב תתיכני וכגבינה תקפיאני, רמז למה שאמרנו:

**Regarding the congealing of semen when it is mixed with the choice parts of the blood of the woman's redness, and the leftovers of this process that becomes the embryo's nourishment, all this is alluded to in the verse: "Behold, I was formed in transgression, and my mother conceived me in sin."<sup>19</sup> "Transgression" refers to the whiteness from the father, and "sin" refers to the redness of the mother. Similarly, the verse "Have You not poured me out like milk, and congealed me like cheese?"<sup>20</sup> refers to the same.**

"My mother conceived me in sin" does not mean that marital relations are sinful (G-d forbid), but simply that a certain element of self-awareness is necessary for them to be carried out as G-d desires, as mentioned above.

Having established that it is specifically the sexual organ that requires physical circumcision, we return now to why this must occur on the eighth day.

ונחזור לענין הטלת הזוהמא, ועירב הטוב והרע הוא עירוב שבעים אומות, כי סמא"ל היא מלך על שבעים שרים, ומיכאל על שבעים סנהדרין שבעים נפש לבית יעקב,

**We shall now return to the subject of the injection of the snake's poison, and how the intermixing of good and evil is the mixing of the seventy nations with Israel in Eve's womb. Samel<sup>21</sup> is the celestial king of the seventy celestial princes, while Michael is the over the seventy sages of the Sanhedrin corresponding to the**

19. Psalms 51:7.

20. Job 10:10.

21. Just like other names of angels that are not used for people's names as well, this name is customarily not pronounced.

### seventy souls of Jacob.<sup>22</sup>

The angelic personification of self-orientation is the “demon” (i.e., negative angel) Samel. Michael is the angelic personification of *chesed*.

The reason there are seventy nations and seventy corresponding descendants of Jacob and members of the Sanhedrin is because these are personifications of the seven emotional attributes from *chesed* to *malchut*, each compounded of ten sub-*sefirot*. The seventy nations express the seventy facets of self-oriented emotion (the emotions of the animal soul), while the seventy members of Jacob’s household express the seventy facets of Divine-oriented emotion (the emotions of the Divine soul).

ומכאן תבין, טעם שאחר שבעה ימים ולילה אחת צריך למול הבן, בסוד פסוק ימי שנותינו בהם שבעים שנה ואם בגבורות שמונים שנה, ובסיבת מה קורעין גזר דין של שבעים שנה.

**From this you will understand why a boy must be circumcised after seven days and one night have passed from his birth, this being the mystical meaning of the verse, “The days of our years in them are seventy years, or with strength, eighty years,”<sup>23</sup> and in what merit the heavenly court annuls a decree of seventy years of suffering.**

The seven days before the *brit* correspond to the seventy years of this verse, the eighth day to the eighty years, as will be explained presently.

There are number of reasons a person could bring upon himself a heavenly decree of seventy years of suffering; among these are articulating for what purpose a bride is brought into her bridal chamber.<sup>24</sup> There are also a number of ways a person can merit to have such a degree annulled; among these are performing a *mitzvah* the way G-d intended<sup>25</sup> and answering *kaddish* with great concentration.<sup>26</sup> The seventy years of suffering are to rectify the blemished seven emotions.

ודע, כי לכל שנה יש שר אחד, ואין רשות לאחד לעבור בתחום חברו, וזהו הסיבה שאין מעשרין מישן על החדש, כי אם כל אחד בשנתו, וגייכ לעשות תשובה בכל שנה באותה שנה, כי אין תשובת שנה זו מועלה לשנה אחרת.

**And know that for every year there is different celestial prince, and that no prince has permission to pass into the area of another’s jurisdiction. This is why we do not take tithes from one year’s produce for the previous year’s, but rather take tithes each year from its own produce. This is also why we must repent every year for the sins of that year, for the repentance of one year does not help for another year.**

Time in Judaism is not a monolithic entity. Every moment in time has its own unique nature and “personality,” a result of the changing hues of Divine energy constantly recreating the world. As part of this, every year has its own personality, and therefore *mitzvot* designated to be performed in a specific year must be done so. Above, this is depicted as the “prince” or angelic personality of a specific year not being able to trespass into another year’s “space.”

וז”ס קורעין לו גזר דינו של שבעים שנה, שהוא ברשותם, והקב”ה חס עליו וקורעו, אבל כשיגיע אדם לשמונים

22. See Genesis 46:8-27.

23. Psalms 90:10.

24. *Shabbat* 33a; *Ketubot* 8b.

25. *Shabbat* 63a.

26. *Ibid.* 119b.

שנה אין להם רשות עליו, וז"ש ואם בגבורות שמונים שנה, שנתגבר עשרה שנים יותר עליונים מהם,

**This is why the heavenly court annuls a decree of seventy years of suffering, for the individual falls under the power of the forces of evil for only seventy years. G-d therefore has mercy on him and annuls this power. But when a person becomes eighty years old, the forces of evil no longer have power over him, this being the mystical meaning of "or with strength, eighty years," meaning that he has overpowered them for ten years.**

Evidently, 70 is the maximum number of years of suffering for which a person can be decreed. This is so because, as we said, 70 is the full expression of the seven emotional attributes. By sinning, a person blemishes these attributes, and since there are only seven, 70 is the maximal period of rectification he needs, a year per sub-*sefirah*. When a person turns 80, he has "outlived" his emotions by 10 years, meaning that he has rectified them through the ten *sefirot* of his Divine soul.

The number 7 is therefore thematically associated with the emotions, the realm of the person's psyche or personality that can be under the influence of evil. Of course, there is evil intellect also, but the major battle between the animal and Divine souls (or their personifications as the evil and good inclinations) is fought over the individual's emotions – what he will love, fear, empathize with, etc. In contrast, the number 8 signifies overcoming this struggle.

ולכן אמר הכתוב וביום השמיני ימול, שיצא משליטת השביעיות ובא לשמיני.

**Therefore Scripture decrees that "on the eighth day he shall be circumcised," for he has then escaped the power of the sevens, and entered the realm of eight.**

Circumcision on the *eighth* day means that the newborn Jew has transcended the power of 7, of nature, of the animal within him, and entered the realm of the transcendent, supernatural power of holiness.

### 3

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר. אָדָם כִּי יְהִיָּה בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ שִׁיאַת אוֹ  
סַפְּחַת אוֹ בְּהֶרֶת וְהָיָה בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ לְנֹגַע צָרְעַת וְהוּבָא אֶל אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ  
אֶל אֶחָד מִבְּנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים.

*G-d spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "A man on whose skin there is a raised-disease or an excess-disease or a bright-disease, and it turns into the plague of tzara'at on his flesh, he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests."<sup>27</sup>*

In this *parashah*, we are given the laws of the various skin diseases (types of *tzara'at*, usually and incorrectly translated as "leprosy") that can render a person spiritually impure. These specific diseases do not render an individual impure because of their physical contagiousness, but rather because their presence reflects some spiritual fault or contamination, as we shall see.

ספר הלקוטים, פרשת תזריע

בענין מראות נגעים שתים שהם ארבע,

27. Leviticus 13:1-2.

*Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Tazria*

**Regarding the appearances of the plagues, we are taught that they are two that subdivide into four.**<sup>28</sup>

The principle appearances are the bright-spot and the raised-spot; the “excess-spot” mentioned in the verse is interpreted to mean that there are two ancillary colors of spots for each of these, giving four colors (actually “shades” or degrees of white) that signal the onset of *tzara’at*.

ופסוק איום ונורא הוא משפטו, ושאתו ממנו יצא.

Also regarding them, it is written: “The Chaldean nation is awesome and terrible; its judgment and its raised-disease come out of it.”<sup>29</sup>

From this verse we see that the occurrence of the raised-sign is caused by a manifestation of Divine judgment.

דע, כי שאתי בהפוך אשתי, יען כי זכה.

**Let us first note that the word for “my raised-disease” (*se’eiti*) may be permuted to spell the word for “my wife” (*ishti*).** This indicates that if a person merits, his wife is good to him; if not, she is like a plague to him.

*Se’eiti: sin-alef-tav-yud; ishti: alef-shin-tav-yud.*

On the verse, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a helpmate opposite him,”<sup>30</sup> the sages comment, “if he merits, she is his helpmate; if not, she becomes his opponent.” In *Chassidut* this statement is interpreted to mean, “if he is *refined*, she [reflects this and] acts as his helpmate; if he is not, she [reflects this, too, and] becomes his opponent.” A person’s spouse mirrors his own level of refinement, particularly his sexual refinement.

דע, כי הדי מראות הם סמא"ל, ושתי שפחותיו סגרי"ה וצריע"ה, הנדבקות בחוה, והוא הטלת הזוהמא בחוה.

**Know that the four appearances of the plagues are manifestations of the two wives of Samael<sup>31</sup> and his two maidservants, Sagrirah and Tzariah, who attach themselves parasitically to Eve. He introduced pollution into Eve.**

Samael is the name of the demon (i.e., angel whose task is to promote evil) who is the general personification of evil. He appears in history first as the primordial snake, who raped Eve and thereby introduced the seminal evil of self-consciousness and self-orientation into humanity.

Elsewhere,<sup>32</sup> the two principle wives of Samael are given as Na’amah and Lilith, and his secondary wives are their maidservants Garirah and Tzariah. These four represent the perversions of sexuality that lurk around a person’s spouse, tempting him to defile his holy marital intercourse by making a means for selfish gratification, mere base, sensual fulfillment, egotistic manipulation, etc., instead of selfless, Divine love.

ואלו הם כנגד הדי אמהות שלקח יעקב דוגמת אדה"ר, ונרמזו בפסוק הנה ערשו ערש ברז"ל, מצד עוג הנרמזו

28. *Negaim* 1:1.

29. *Habakkuk* 1:7.

30. *Genesis* 2:18; Rashi *ad loc.*

31. It is customary not pronounce the names of demons (or their wives, etc.), so as not to lend strength to the evils they personify.

32. *Likutei Torah, Tazria*.

לסמא"ל.

**These four she-demons are opposite the four mothers that Jacob married, thereby imitating Adam. They are alluded to in the verse describing King Og of Bashan, "Behold, his bed is a bed of iron,"<sup>33</sup> for Og alludes to Samael.**

Jacob married two principle wives, Rachel and Leah, and their maidservants, Bilhah and Zilpah. The initials of their four names spell the word for "iron" (*barzel*).

Og was the king who attempted to prevent the Jewish people from entering the land of Israel. Entering the land of Israel is another analog of sexual intercourse, the Jewish people being the husband and the land the wife that they enter and fertilize both physically and spiritually, in order to produce physical and spiritual yield. Og, in seeking to prevent this holy entering, assumes the role of Samael, who, together with his wives, seeks to derail the holy intercourse between husband and wife.

(It is apparent from this also that anyone who is not a member of the Jewish nation and lives in and thereby "husbands" the land of Israel is committing spiritual adultery. The Torah therefore forbids non-Jews to live in the land of Israel.<sup>34</sup>)

Jacob rectified the sin of Adam; he is therefore considered himself to be a rectified version of Adam, the consummate human being.

וענין מה ששמש אדה"ר ק"ל שנה בליין ורוחין, מצד סמא"ל שעולה ק"ל.

**This relates to the 130 years during which Adam consorted with liliths and spirits derived from Samael, the numerical value of whose name is also 130 plus the kolel.**

Adam separated from Eve after the expulsion from the Garden of Eden and did not return to her until 130 years later, when they together had their third son, Seth. During this hiatus, he did not succeed in remaining celibate, but rather his sexual force was spent on succumbing to the fantasies offered him by Samael's wives, and he thus sired legions of demons who propagated the energy of selfish sensual fulfillment ("evil") throughout reality.

*Samael: samech-mem-alef-lamed: 60 + 40 + 1 + 30 + 131.*

ומ"ש אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו ולא אמר איש, כי כל החטא הוא מצד אדם,

**The reason the Torah uses the word *adam* for "man" in the phrase "a man on whose skin..." instead of the more usual word *ish* is because the sin that causes *tzara'at* to appear on the skin is committed because the individual is in a sense reliving the life Adam.**

I.e., he is succumbing to sexual temptation, as we have seen that Adam did.

כי לא נקרא שם שלם כי אם ישראל, כי קודם נדבק סמא"ל בכף ירכו, והוא צולע מצד הצלע האחר שהיה לאדם מקודם, כמ"ש ויקח אחת מצלעותיו, שהיא חוה ולא האחרת ליליית.

**The only name used to describe someone in the fullest state of Divine consciousness is "Israel." Before Jacob was given this name, Samael was attached to his thigh, and he was limping because he was struck with regard to the other rib that Adam**

33. Deuteronomy 3:11.

34. Ibid. 7:2; Rashi *ad loc.*

**had previously lost, as it is written, “And He took one of his ribs.”<sup>35</sup> This rib was made into Eve, and not the other wife, Lilith.**

As mentioned above, Jacob rectified the sin of Adam and in so doing became the perfected version of Adam (who had blemished himself spiritually by committing the primordial sin).

The purpose of Jacob’s stay with Laban was to work on rectifying Adam’s sin. As he later told Esau, Jacob “dwelt with Laban,” the word “dwelt” alluding numerically to the 613 commandments he kept in order to perfect reality.<sup>36</sup> Having done this, Jacob prepared to return to the land of Israel. Inasmuch as the land of Israel is an analog to the Garden of Eden, his return there was to be the spiritual equivalent of Adam’s return to the Garden, the restitution of reality to its pristine Divine state.

But when Jacob returned to the land of Israel (which, as we have seen, is a metaphor for marital relations) after his stay with Laban, he had to first prepare to confront Esau (another personification of Samael). The night before their encounter, he wrestled with Esau’s angel (i.e., Samael), and although he overcame him, he was left limping because “he struck his hip-socket, so Jacob’s hip-socket was dislocated.”<sup>37</sup>

Now, at the conclusion of this encounter, Esau’s angel blessed Jacob and informed him that his name would become Israel, but G-d did not actually give Jacob this second name until later (after the Jacob actually met Esau, the incident with Dinah occurred, and Jacob built an altar at Bethel).<sup>38</sup> In other words, there was some lapse of time between Jacob’s struggle with Esau’s angel and his completion of the rectification of Adam’s sin, signaled by his being renamed “Israel.”<sup>39</sup>

In other words, as Jacob was about to enter the land of Israel (an analog for marital relations) and complete the rectification of Adam’s sin, Samael came and attempted to derail him from achieving his goal. He did this by tempting him with sexual perversion, just as he had done at the dawn of history with Adam and he does whenever holy, loving marital relations are about to occur. In other words, he “struck” him with regards to his relationship with his spouse. Since Eve had been constructed out of Adam’s rib, this is tantamount to saying that Samael struck Jacob’s rib, trying to subvert the true marriage, Adam-to-Eve, with a spurious one, Adam-to-Lilith.

When Jacob was healed of this limp, it indicated that he had overcome this temptation and had earned the name “Israel.”

וזמ"ש לזאת יקרא אשה כי מאיש לוקחה זאת,

**This is the meaning of the verse, “Therefore she shall be called ‘woman’ (*ishah*) for this one was taken from man (*ish*).”<sup>40</sup>**

The emphasized words indicate that Eve is here being contrasted with someone else, namely, Lilith.

ושם י"ה ביניהם, כי באחרת שניהם נקראו א"ש,

**The Divine Name *Kah* is the difference between them, and without it, they are both fire (*esh*).**

35. Genesis 2:21.

36. Ibid. 32:5, Rashi *ad loc.*

37. Ibid. 32:26. See also v. 32.

38. Ibid. 35:10.

39. See Rashi on 33:18, that Jacob was healed of his limp before he arrived in Shechem.

40. Genesis 2:23.

The words for “man” (*ish*: *alef-yud-shin*) and “woman” (*ishah*: *alef-shin-hei*) are very similar. Each is composed of three letters, two of which are the same as in the other word. The two common letters (*alef-shin*) spell the word for “fire,” and the two different letters (*yud* in *ish* and *hei* in *ishah*) spell the Divine Name *Kah* (*yud-hei*).

As the sages of the Talmud point out,<sup>41</sup> this means that the union of husband and wife should include the Divine presence, and the when it does not, they are not really a true man and woman but just two fires, two opposing passions.

ולכן השדים פורחים באויר, לפי שהם מיסוד האש והרוח,

### **This is why demons fly about in the air, for they are composed of the elements of fire and air.**

As we know, demons are produced by sexuality devoid of the presence of G-d, i.e., the simple fire of sensual passion expressing selfish pleasure-seeking, etc.

After this digression regarding the essence of sexual perversion, the Arizal now explains why sexual perversion causes *tzara'at*.

וענין קריאתה צרעת, מצד ליליית צרית עיין,

### **As to why the skin disease is called *tzara'at*, it is because it comes from Lilith, who was jealous (*tzarat ayin*).**

The word for “jealous” (*tzarat ayin*, literally, “troubled of eye”) is spelled *tzadik-reish-tav ayin-yud-nun*. The latter three letter can be considered simply the spelling out of the name of the letter *ayin*, so that the whole locution becomes *tzadik-reish-tav-ayin*. These are the same letters used to spell *tzara'at*: *tzadik-reish-ayin-tav*.

ולכן הורגת ילדי חוה וכעסתה צרתה גם כעס,

### **She therefore kills the children of Eve, as it is written, “her rival provoked her repeatedly....”<sup>42</sup>**

The word for a rival wife is *tzarah*, literally, a “troublemaker,” since in a polygamous setting it is assumed each wife will consider the other a troublemaker. Lilith considered Eve such a troublemaker, usurping her perceived husband. In her angry jealousy of Eve, she seeks to destroy Eve’s children through infant mortality, crib death, etc. (G-d forbid).

אבל היא אינה שולטת במי שמקדש עצמו בשעת תשמיש, שהוא מושך משך הזרע ממקום עליון, שהוא מנהר ג'ע, ונעשה להם עניג הפך הנג'ע, ונרמזו בפי אשריכם זורעי על כל מים החיים, והוא מי שמקדש עצמו:

**But she cannot rule over someone who sanctifies himself during marital relations, for such a person elicits a flow of seed from a supernal source, i.e., the river of the Garden of Eden. This becomes for the married couple a delight (*oneg*), rather than a plague (*nega*). This is alluded to in the verse, “Happy are you who sow upon all the waters”<sup>43</sup>—the waters of life, referring to someone who sanctifies himself during marital intercourse.**

41. *Sotah* 17a.

42. 1 Samuel 1:6.

43. Isaiah 32:20.

If marital relations are conducted in a spirit of selflessness, love, and holiness, the children produced are immune to Lilith's machinations. The couple's delight in each other does not degenerate into a plague.

The words for "plague" [*nega*] and "delight" [*oneg*] are composed of the same letters:

*Nega*: nun-gimel-ayin.

*Oneg*: ayin-nun-gimel.

Proper intentions during marital intercourse ensure that these letters will be ordered properly.

ולהפך, למי שאינו מקדש עצמו נעשה נג"ע, ומושך ממקום המים העכורים, מי המרים המאררים הנרמזים בסוטה, כי לכן וצבתה בטנה ונפלה ירכה, תחת אשר שטתה תחת בעלה בזוהמת הנחש.

**In contrast, for someone who does not sanctify himself during marital relations, his experience becomes that of the plague. He elicits a flow of seed from the place of murky waters, the "waters of bitterness that bring curses," as alluded to in the laws of the suspected adulteress (*sotah*).<sup>44</sup> This is why the punishment of the suspected adulteress, when found guilty, is that her belly (i.e., her womb) swells and her leg falls off,<sup>45</sup> because she was disloyal to her husband by accepting the impurity of the snake.**

By committing adultery, a person elicits unholy seed. This flow of seed becomes manifest as the water given to the suspected adulteress to drink; if she is guilty, it destroys her sexual organs and kills her.

ולכן אם נקתה, ונורעה זרע ממקום העליון.

**And therefore also, if she is proven innocent, she "sows seed" from the supernal source.<sup>46</sup>**

If she was innocent, the water given to her to drink is rooted in the same source as that of seed elicited during holy intercourse. According to the sages, if the woman was infertile, the water makes her fertile; if she hitherto produced ugly children, she will henceforth produce beautiful children, and so on.<sup>47</sup>

ולחווה נהפך הכל לדם נדות, המביאים צרעת, ונהפך ענג לנגע. ו"מעדן" נהר "גן,

**For Eve, the impurity of the primordial snake turned into the blood of menstruation, which causes *tzara'at*, and her delight (*oneg*) turned into plague (*nega*). The process of Eden-river-garden became the plague.**

One cause of *tzara'at* is intercourse with a menstruating woman.<sup>48</sup> During menstruation, a woman is acutely conscious of herself and her physical feelings, and therefore not capable of focusing on marital relations in a selfless, loving way. Marital relations are therefore forbidden during this time, and someone who engages in them will be affected by the woman's self-orientation, leading to *tzara'at*.

44. par. Numbers 5:22-23.

45. Numbers 5:21, 27.

46. Ibid. 5:28.

47. Rashi on this verse.

48. *Zohar* 3:33b; *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 38; *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *Iyov*.

“And a river came forth from Eden to water the garden.”<sup>49</sup> The same letters that spell both “delight” [oneg] and “plague” [nega] are the initials of the three words for “Eden” [eiden], “river” [nahar], and “garden” [gan].

ואות ה' של אברהם הקטינה עצמה,

### The *hei* of the name Abraham diminished itself.

G-d changed Abram's name to Abraham by adding the letter *hei*. In this context, He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you a father of a multitude of nations.”<sup>50</sup> This would be ample cause for haughtiness, but Abraham remained humble. This is alluded to by the following. In the verse, “These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created,”<sup>51</sup> the word for “when they were created” (*behibaram*) can be permuted to spell “Abraham” (*Avraham*), indicating that the whole world was created in the merit of Abraham.<sup>52</sup> But in this very word, the *hei* – the letter that made Abram into Abraham, the person on whose merit the whole world rests – is written small.

ולכן אלו הארבע מראות נגעים באים על גסי הרוח וג'ע וגאוה. ונרמזו בפסוק יען כי גבהו בנות ציון וכו', ונקראת שאת על שם הגאוה, וספחת על שם גלוי עריות, ובהרת על שם דם הנדות, לכן הצרעת בא מהם,

**And therefore, these four appearances of *tzara'at* come upon the haughty, the sexually perverse, and the boastful.<sup>53</sup> This is alluded to in the verse, “because the daughters of Zion have been haughty...”<sup>54</sup> The disease is called a “raised-disease” because it comes from haughtiness, and an “excess disease” because it comes from sexual perverseness, and a “bright-disease” because it comes from having relations with a woman before she has purified herself from the blood of menstruation. Therefore *tzara'at* comes from these three sins.**

“Excess” alludes to how a person seeks sexual fulfillment in ways other than with his spouse. “Bright” is the opposite of the darkness of blood.

ולכן נאמר והובא אל הכהן להסגירו, לפי שבהסגרתו יעשה תשובה, כי בהיותו נסגר אינו יכול לעשות רע, או אחד מאלו הדברים הגורמים הצרעת. ואם לא שב, היה הכהן מחליטו, ומחויץ למחנה מושבו, וטמא טמא יקרא.

**This is also why it is written, “he shall be brought to the priest” in order that he quarantine him, for during his isolation he will repent, inasmuch as when he is quarantined he cannot do evil or any of the things that cause *tzara'at*. If he did not repent, the priest would declare him impure and he would have to “dwell outside the camp, and announce as he walked, ‘impure, impure!’”<sup>55</sup> so that others would know to stay away from him.**

ודוגמא זה יש הסגר לנפשות למעלה, ע"י מיכאל הכהן העליון, או ע"י מלאך אחר קטן ממנו, וז"ש או אל אחד

49. Genesis 2:10.

50. Ibid. 17:5.

51. Ibid. 2:4.

52. *Bereishit Rabbah* 12:9.

53. See *Arachin* 16a.

54. Isaiah 3:16.

55. Leviticus 13:45.

מבניו הכהנים הנרמזו בפסוק.

Similarly, the souls above are quarantined by the angel Michael, the supernal priest, or by some other lesser angel, this being the meaning of the phrase, “or to one of his sons, the priests.”

אבל אם היה מצורע מוחלט אוי לו, כי בדרך ישב מחוץ למחנה מושבו, בד"ד עולה עשרה, ר"ל חוץ ל"י ספירות, למקום החיצונים.

But if such a soul is declared to suffer from *tzara'at*, woe to him, for “he must dwell alone outside the camp.” The numerical value of the word for “alone” (*badad*) is 10, meaning outside the realm of the ten *sefirot*, in the realm of evil.

*Badad*: *beit-dalet-dalet* = 2 + 4 + 4 = 10.

וטמא טמא יקרא, שנמסר ביד מחבלים בשדה, ונקרא איש שדה, על שם שדים מחלק איש יודע ציד איש שדה, כי משם חלקו של עשו, רחמנא לשזובן.

“And he will call, ‘impure, impure,’” meaning that he is given over to those who “wreck havoc in the field,”<sup>56</sup> each of whom is called “a man of the field,” for they are happy to be of the portion of “the man who knows how to hunt, the man of the field,”<sup>57</sup> this being the domain of Esau, may G-d preserve us.

#### 4

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר. אָדָם כִּי יְהִיָּה בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאת אֹ  
סַפְּחַת אוֹ בְּהֶרֶת וְהָיָה בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ לְנִגַע צָרְעַת וְהוּבָא אֶל אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ  
אֶל אֶחָד מִבְּנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים.

*G-d spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “A man on whose skin there is a raised-disease or an excess-disease or a bright-disease, and it turns into the plague of tzara'at on his flesh, he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests.”*<sup>58</sup>

<p>שער המצות, פרשת תזריע דע, כי אדם הזה, הוא ז"א, שהוא שם הוי"ה דאלפין, שהוא ג"י אדם כנודע.</p>	<p>ספר הלכותים, פרשת תזריע דע, כי אדם הוא ז"א, שהוא שם מ"ה העולה אד"ם,</p>
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*Sefer HaLikutim and Sha'ar HaMitzvot, parashat Tazria*

Know that the word “man” refers to *Z'eir Anpin*, since this *partzuf* manifests the 45-Name, the allusion to this being that 45 is the numerical value of the word for “man” (*adam*).

The four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* manifest the four principle *partzufim*: *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*.

56. Cf. Song of Songs 2:15.

57. Genesis 25:27.

58. Leviticus 13:1-2.

Adam: *alef-mem-dalet* = 1 + 40 + 4 = 45.

וממנו יוצאות שתי נשים מאחוריו רחל ולאה. ואמנם בשם מ"ה יש גי אלפי"ן, ואלו הם מוציאי"ן לאה ורחל מאחוריו, לאה כנגד א' עליונה, ורחל נוטלת ב' אלפי"ן, לפי שרחל מתחלת מן החזה של ז"א: ושתי נשים לאה ורחל, יוצאים באחוריו, זו למעלה מזו. והנה בשם ההוי"ה דאלפי"ן, יש שלשה אלפי"ן, ומן האחת יוצאות לאה. אבל רחל, לוקחת שני אלפי"ן התחתונות, לפי שהיא יוצאה מן החזה ולמטה.

**From the rear of *Z'eir Anpin* issue his two wives, *Rachel* and *Leah*. Indeed, there are three *alef's* in the 45-Name, which produce *Leah* and *Rachel* from behind him: *Leah* from the first, highest *alef*, and *Rachel* from the two other *alef's*, because *Rachel* begins from the chest of *Z'eir Anpin*, as follows.**

What distinguishes the 45-Name from the other spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* is the three *alef's* used to spell out the last three letters. These three *alef's* are seen as the source of the two feminine *partzufim* that issue from *Z'eir Anpin*, just as these *alef's* are implicit in the Name *Havayah* and the means of expression issue from the emotions.

As we have seen previously, *Leah* and *Rachel*, the two manifestations of *Nukva*, signify the three means of expression: *Leah* is thought, while *Rachel* is speech and action. *Leah* is positioned parallel to the intellect and upper parts of the emotions of *Z'eir Anpin*, since thought is primarily used to express intellect and abstract emotion, while *Rachel* is positioned parallel to the lower emotions of *Z'eir Anpin*, which are expressed primarily through speech and action.

The upper emotions are considered to be *chesed* and *gevurah* (manifest in the body as the right and left arms) and the upper third of *tiferet* (the heart).

והנה מציאות שם זה, נחלק כך, יו"ד בחבמה דז"א, ה' בבינה, אלפי"ן של מלוי הה"א בדעת, ו' בת"ת בגי"ש, ה"א בנה"י. והנה סדר התחלקות הוי"ה זו בז"א, הוא זה: יוד, בחכמה שבו. ה' בבינה שבו. ואת אלפי"ן שבמילוי ה"א זו הראשונה, היא בדעת שבו. וא"ו, בשלשה שלישי הת"ת שבו. ה"א אחרונה, בנה"י שבו.

**The 45-Name is manifest in *Z'eir Anpin* as follows: The three letters that spell *yud* are manifest in *chochmah* of *Z'eir Anpin*; the first *hei* used to spell the letter *hei* is manifest in *binah*; the *alef* used to spell out the first *hei* is manifest in *da'at*; the three letters used to spell *vav* are manifest in the three thirds of *tiferet*; and the three letters used to spell the final *hei* are manifest in *netzach-hod-yesod*.**

simple spelling	filling	sub-sefirah of <i>Z'eir Anpin</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>chochmah</i>
	<i>vav</i>	
	<i>dalet</i>	
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>binah</i>
	<i>alef</i>	<i>da'at</i>
<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>tiferet</i>
	<i>alef</i>	
	<i>vav</i>	
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>netzach-hod-yesod</i>
	<i>alef</i>	



וּזְיִס מִשְׁחָרַב בְּהַמִּיָּק, שֶׁהִיא רַחֵל, שֵׁשׁ לֵה שְׁנֵי אֹרֹת, | וּזְיִס מִיֵּשׁ רֹזִ"ל, מִשְׁחָרַב בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, שֶׁהִיא רַחֵל,  
אֲסוּר לִשְׁחֹק, כִּי אֵין שְׁחֹק אֵלָא בְּזִמָּן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ | שֵׁשׁ לֵה שְׁנֵי אֹרֹת כְּמִנִּין בֵּי"ת, אֲסוּר לְאָדָם שִׁמְלָא  
קִיִּים, כִּי שְׁחֹ"ק וּבֵי"ת, הַכֹּל מִסְפֵּר אֶחָד. | שְׁחֹק פִּי, לְפִי שְׁאִין שְׁחֹק, אֵלָה בְּזִמָּן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ  
קִיִּים, כִּי שְׁחֹק וּבֵית שׁוּיִם בְּגִימְטְרִיא.

**This is the mystical meaning of our sages' statement that "since the destruction of the Holy Temple"—which is a manifestation of *Rachel*, who possesses two types of light—"it is forbidden to fill one's mouth with laughter."<sup>59</sup> For there is true laughter only when the Temple is standing, inasmuch as the numerical values of the words for "laughter" and "house" are the same when related via twice the word for "light."**

The idiom for "Temple" is *beit ha-mikdash*, literally, "the house of the sanctuary."

Although the numerical value of *bayit* is 412 and that of *sechok* is 414, *sechok* is two times *or* (207) and two times the last two letters of *or* (206) is *bayit* (412).

*Rachel's* diminished stature, extending only as high as *Z'eir Anpin's* chest, reflects the state of reality during the exile, when the Temple is in ruins. Since reality in this state is imperfect, it is not fitting for us to be totally happy at any time. (Hence the Jewish custom of remembering the destruction of the Temple even at happy occasions, by breaking a glass at a wedding, leaving part of a house unpainted, etc.)

Mystically, this state is indicated by the fact that the letter *alef* must be removed from the word for "light" in order for the two lights of *Rachel* (speech and action) to reach the numerical value of *bayit*. Removing the *alef* from *Rachel's* lights signifies the destruction of the Temple, since the Temple, the "house of prayer,"<sup>60</sup> the yearning of the feminine principle of creation for content given to it by the masculine principle, is a manifestation of *Rachel*. When the light of *Rachel* is lacking (because the Temple is destroyed), the "house" produced by this is less than the full value of "laughter."

אֲךְ הַזֵּיא יֵשׁ לוֹ כָּל הַגִּ' אֶלְפֵי"ן, שֶׁהֵם גִּ' אֹרֹת | וְהַעֲנִין, כִּי זֵיא יֵשׁ לוֹ גִ' אֶלְפִין, וְהֵם גִּ'פִּ אֹר, שֶׁהֵם  
שְׁלָמִים, וְגִי"פ אֹי"ר בְּגִימְטְרִיא כְּתִ"ר, | גִּי כְּתֵר עִ"ה,

**But *Z'eir Anpin* possesses all three *alef's*, signifying three complete types of light, and three times the numerical value of the word for "light" (*or*, 207) is the numerical value of the word *keter* (620) plus the *kolel*.**

*Keter*: *kaf-tav-reish* = 20 + 400 + 200 = 620.

$207 \times 3 = 621$ .

כִּי הַכְּתֵר שֶׁל זֵיא הוּא שְׁלָם, אֲךְ הַכְּתֵר שֶׁל רַחֵל אֵינוֹ | כִּי הַכְּתֵר דִּזֵּיא הוּא שְׁלָם כְּמִבּוֹאֵר אֲצִלֵּינוּ כָּל דְּרוֹשׁ  
אֵלָא שְׁנֵי אֹרֹת, | זֶה בְּאוֹרֵךְ, בְּעִנִּין אַרְבַּעַה שְׁנַכְנְסוּ לְפִרְדָּס, וְעִישׁ הֵיטֵב  
בִּיאֹרָם. אֲמָנָם הַכְּתֵר שֶׁל רַחֵל, אֵין בּוֹ רַק בִּי אֹרֹת  
בְּלִבָּד.

**This indicates that the *keter* of *Z'eir Anpin* is complete, while the *keter* of *Rachel* comprises only two types of light.**

59. See *Berachot* 31a.

60. *Isaiah* 56:7.

והענין הוא, כי כל אור הוא חסד, בסוד חמש אורות דיום ראשון, שהם חמש חסדים וחמשה מים דיום שני, הם חמש גבורות, בסוד גבורות גשמים. והנה אלו האורות, הם החסדים דאימא אשר בז"א, ולהם ג' בחי': אחת, היותם מכוסים בדעת, ואחת, בשליש אמצעי דתפארת, שהוא החזה, אשר שם התחלת הגילוי. ואח"כ חוזרין להתאסף יחד, ולהתקבץ כבראשונה, ביסוד ז"א.

וכל אור הוא בחסד כנודע: ואלו האורות, הם סוד חסדים של בינה שבז"א. ויש להם ג' בחינות, א' בדעת, וא' בשליש השני של הת"ת, כי משם מתחילין להתגלות, ולמעלה היו מכוסים, הרי שני בחינות, ולמטה ביסוד דז"א מתקבצים, הרי ג' בחינות החסדים.

**Every type of light is a type of *chesed*, as is known. The lights of *Z'eir Anpin*, signified by the *alef's*, are states of *chesed* of *binah*, i.e., *Ima*, vested in *Z'eir Anpin*. There are three aspects to their investiture in *Z'eir Anpin*: they are first manifest in its *da'at*; next in the second third of its *tiferet*, which is where they begin to be revealed—while above in *da'at*, they were concealed within *yesod* of *Ima*—this gives two aspects; and below in the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, where they are gathered together—this gives three aspects of the manifestation of the states of *chesed* of *Ima* in *Z'eir Anpin*.**

והם ג' אלפיי"ן שבשם מ"ה, | וכנגד שלשה אלו, הם שלשה אלפיי"ן דמ"ה.

**These are signified by the three *alef's* in the 45-Name.**

וכן ה' אורות של יום ראשון, הם ה' חסדים. והי"פ מים, | הם ה' גבורות, בסוד גבורות גשמים.

**The five times the word "light" is mentioned in the account of the first day of creation<sup>61</sup> manifest the five states of *chesed*, while the five times the word "water" is mentioned in the account of the second day of creation<sup>62</sup> manifest the five states of *gevurah*, as reflected in the idiom, "the powers of providing rain."<sup>63</sup>**

The first day of creation manifests the first of G-d's *midot*, *chesed*; the second day, the second of these *midot*, *gevurah*.

The second blessing of the *Amidah* is called *Gevurot*, "powers," for it describes G-d's powers. During the winter, the phrase "He makes the wind blow and causes the rain to fall" is added, praising G-d for providing rain. This phrase is called in the Talmud "the powers of [providing] rain," for in order for rain to be beneficial, it must come down gently, meaning that the flow of water has to be restrained; this is an act of *gevurah*. Hence, the five times the word "water" is mentioned in account of the second day of creation signify five states of *gevurah*, even though in general, water signifies *chesed*.

Here we have additional proof that the lights are types of *chesed*, as stated above.

והנה לאה אין לה רק אור אחד בלבד, והוא שלישי הכתר. ורחל שני אורות, שני שלישי כתר. ולכן דיני לאה, מרובין כפלים משל רחל. ולא עוד אלה שרחל לוקחת שני אורות, והם מגולים, ולאה אור אחד, והוא מכוסה.

ולאה אין לה אלא שלישי כתר, שהוא אור א', ולכן דיני לאה מרובים כפלים משל רחל, ובפרט, שגם הוא אור מכוסה, ושל רחל שני אורות מגולים:

61. Genesis 1:1-5.

62. Ibid. 1:6-8.

63. *Berachot* 26b, etc.

**Leah possesses only a third of a *keter*, i.e., one light, so therefore, the states of severe judgment in *Leah* are more numerous—double, in fact—than they are in *Rachel*. This is especially true since the one *alef* manifest in *Leah* is a concealed light, while in *Rachel* the two lights are revealed.**

*Leah*, as we saw, is derived from the letter *alef* used to spell out the first *hei* of the Name *Havayah* when it has the numerical value of 45. Since this light—the light of the five states of *chesed* of *Ima* as they are manifest (first) in *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*—is derived from the intellect, whose job it is to be judgmental in its process of analysis, the *partzuf* it produces, *Leah*, is more judgmental than *Rachel*.

<p>ועתה נבאר אל ביאור הכתוב, אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת וגוי. דע, כי אלו האורות אינן יוצאין מחוץ לאחורי ז"א, להוציא את לאה ורחל, אלה עד שיכנסו גם המוחין דאבא תוך ז"א, לפי שבהיות שם מוחין דאבא, אין יכולת אל החצונים להתאחו באלו החסדים דאימא,</p>	<p>והנה אורות אלו, אינם יוצאים לחוץ להוציא לאה ורחל, רק כשבאים בתוכם המוחין דאבא ג"כ, כי המוחין דאבא דוחים החיצונים, שלא יכנסו ויתאחו מן החסדים של הבינה,</p>
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**Now, these lights of *Z'eir Anpin*, originating in *Ima*, do not issue outward in order to produce *Rachel* and *Leah* until the mentality of *Abba* enters them also. For the mentality of *Abba* repels the forces of evil, preventing them from entering and latching onto *binah's*, i.e., *Ima's*, states of *chesed*.**

The mentality of *Abba* is the pristine, intense experience of the initial insight. By reliving the purity of this experience after the development of *binah*, the development process is inoculated against infection from the forces of evil that seek to corrupt the intellect-emotion process and steer it in the wrong direction.

<p>אשר הם עיקר עץ הדעת, שמשם יונקים החיצונים, כמבואר אצלינו.</p>	<p>אשר הם סוד עץ הדעת טוב ורע, שמשם יונקים החיצונים כמבואר אצלינו בפרשת בראשית, בענין חטא אדם הראשון.</p>
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**These states of *chesed* constitute the main aspect of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, from which the forces of evil derive sustenance, as we have explained elsewhere.**

The five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah* within *da'at* are the propensities toward acceptance and rejection that are implied in any emotional connection to the abstract idea emerging from *chochmah* and *binah*. They are thus the initial source of good and evil.

<p>והנה כאשר אלו המוחין דאבא, לא נכנסו בז"א, אז במקום שלשה אלפין אלו, שמוצאין את לאה ורחל כנזכר, מוצאין ג' נגעים: שאת, וספחת, ובהרת, שהם בחינת דינים קשים מאד מצד הקדושה, שדוחין את רוח הטומאה מן האדם, או מן הבית, כנזכר בווהר פרשת תזריע, במאמר הנז"ל דף ק' ע"א, ועכ"ז, מאלו הג' נגעים, הוי יניקת כל החיצונים, ואז אין נעשה פרצוף לאה או רחל.</p>	<p>וכאשר אין אור אבא נגלה והוא נעלם, אז במקום אלו הג' אלפין, המוציאים לאה ורחל, יוצאים ג' מיני נגעים, שאת ספחת בהרת, ומשם כל יניקתם, ואין יכולת להעשות שם פרצופי לאה ורחל.</p>
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**When the light of *Abba* is not revealed, having been hidden, then, in the place of the three *alef's* that produce *Leah* and *Rachel*, three types of *tzara'at* issue: the raised-disease, the excess-disease, and the bright-disease. This is the source**

of all the forces of evil's sustenance, and their presence prevents the issue of the *partzufim* of Leah and Rachel.

ואמנם שאת, כנגד אי ראשונה של לאה, וזהו שאת | והנה שאת, כנגד אי ראשונה שבלאה, לפי שהיא לשון הגבהה, שהיא היותר גבוהה. נשאת וגבוה למעלה.

The raised-disease is the counter-principle of the first *alef*. Thus, it is called the *raised-disease*, for it is the highest.

Corresponding, as it does, to the highest of the three *alef*'s.

וספחת ובהרת, כנגד שני אורות של רחל: | ובהרת וספחת, כנגד שני אורות דרחל.

The excess-disease and the bright-disease are the counter-principles of the two lights of Rachel.

והנה כונת דברי הזוהר במאמר הנז"ל, דינ ע"א, באורו הוא: כי הנגע הוא דין קשה וקדוש, הדוחה את רוח הטומאה מן האדם, ומי גרם להתגלות הצרעת, שהוא רוח הטומאה, הנאחו מחמת סגירו דנהירו עילאה דלא אתגלי, שהוא מוחין דאבא, שלא נתגלו בז"א כנוכר, וזה אמרו, נגע צרעת, כתרגומו: מכתש סגירו, דא סגירו דנהירו עילאה כו'. כי לכן נאחזו החיצונים שם, הנקרא צרעת. ולכן והובא אל הכהן, כדי שימשוך ויגלה אותו הסגירו דמוחין דאבא, שיתמשכו על ידי אהרן הכהן, שהוא כהן גדול, שסודו בחכמה כנודע. או אל אחד מבניו, שהוא בחסד, ענף החכמה.

וזמ"ש בזוהר פ' תזריע כי נגע צרעת תרגומו מכתש סגירו, וכונת דבריו, כי נגע הזה הוא קדושה, ודוחה את רוח הטומאה אשר בבית או באדם, והוא כח דין של הקדושה, וזהו נגע. ומי גרם זה, הצרעת, פי' הסגירו דנהירו עילאה דלא אתגלי, היא הנקרא צרעת, לכן והובא אל אהרן הכהן, להמשיך ולגלות אותו הסגירו דנהורא עילאה,

This allows us to understand what is written in the *Zohar*<sup>64</sup> the Aramaic translation of "the plague of *tzara'at*" is "a closing plague." It means that this "disease" is in fact holy, and expels the impurity that has infected the house or the person. It is a manifestation of the holy power of judgment. This is the implication of the word "the plague of." What causes this manifestation of holy judgment and power of repulsion? "*tzara'at*," meaning: "the closing off of the supernal light, so that it not be revealed" in the words of the *Zohar*—this is what is called *tzara'at*. Therefore the person must be brought to Aaron the priest, in order to elicit and reveal again that supernal light that had been closed off.

זהו לשון הזוהר. וביאור דבריו, |

These are the words of the *Zohar*. The explanation is as follows:

כי נהורא עילאה שנסגר, הוא מוחין דאבא שלא נתגלו בז"א, והוא הגורם את הצרעת, שהם אחיות החיצונים.

The "supernal light" that has been closed off is the mentality of *Abba* that is not revealed in *Z'eir Anpin*. This is what causes *tzara'at*, i.e., the latching on of the powers of evil.

64. 3:47a.

ובזה תבין טעם המצורע החשוב כמת, וכמ"ש לעיל בפרשת ויחי בדיני האבלות, כי המיתה גורמת הסתלקות מוחין דאבא מן האבל, וז"ס ימותו ולא בחכמה, כי החכמה תחיה בעליה, ובהסתלקה משם, נמשכת המיתה, נמצא כי ימותו, והסבה מפני שהם בלתי חכמה. והמצורע שהוא בהסתלקות מוחין דאבא, נקרא גם כן מת.

וז"ס מ"ש חז"ל מצורע חשוב כמת, כי כבר ביארנו בסוד האבילות, כי המיתה גורמת הסתלקות מוחין דאבא עילאה, וזמשי"ה ימותו ולא בחכמה, כי החכמה תחיה בעליה, ובהסתלקותה אז היא המיתה, ולכן כאשר ימותו, מחסרון החכמה הוא, וז"ש ימותו ולא בחכמה, כנזכר.

This is why the sages state that "one who suffers from *tzara'at* is likened to a dead person."<sup>65</sup> As we have already explained in our discussion of the rites of mourning, death causes the mentality of *Abba* to depart, as it is written, "they die, and they are left without *chochmah*,"<sup>66</sup> for "*chochmah* gives life to those who possess it."<sup>67</sup> When it is removed, there is death; when "they die," it is because of the lack of *chochmah*.

65. *Nedarim* 64a.

66. *Job* 4:21.

67. *Ecclesiastes* 7:12.