

# “Outside the Camp”: Tsara'at, Our Community and How to Stay Positive Within Quarantine

ויקרא פרק יג: א-ג, מד-מו

<p>The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:</p> <p>When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling, a rash, or a discoloration, and it develops into a scaly affection on the skin of his body, it shall be reported to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests.</p> <p>The priest shall examine the affection on the skin of his body: if hair in the affected patch has turned white and the affection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous affection; when the priest sees it, he shall pronounce him unclean.</p>	<p>וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר:</p> <p>אִזְמַם כִּי־יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאת אִו־סַפְחַת אוֹ בְהֶרֶת וְהָיָה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ לְגַגֵּעַ צָרַעַת וְהוּבָא אֶל־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ אֶל־אֶחָד מִבְּנָיֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים:</p> <p>וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַגֵּגֵעַ בְּעוֹר־הַבְּשָׂר וְשַׁעַר בְּגִגֵּעַ הַפֶּה וּלְבוֹ וּמִרְאָה הַגֵּגֵעַ עֲמַק מֵעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ גִגֵּעַ צָרַעַת הוּא וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְטִמְא אֹתוֹ:</p>
<p>The man is leprous; he is unclean. The priest shall pronounce him unclean; he has the affection on his head.</p> <p>As for the person with a leprous affection, his clothes shall be rent, his head shall be left bare, and he shall cover over his upper lip; and he shall call out, “Unclean! Unclean!”</p> <p>He shall be unclean as long as the disease is on him. Being unclean, he shall dwell apart; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.</p>	<p>אִישׁ־צָרוּעַ הוּא טָמֵא הוּא טָמֵא? טִמְאָנוּ הַכֹּהֵן בְּרֹאשׁוֹ נִגְעוֹ:</p> <p>וְהִצְרוּעַ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע בְּגִדָיו יִהְיוּ פְרָמִים וְרֹאשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה פָרוּעַ וְעַל־שָׂפָם יַעֲטֶה וְטָמֵא אִ טָמֵא יִקְרָא:</p> <p>כָּל־יָמָיו אֲשֶׁר הַגֵּגֵעַ בּוֹ? טָמֵא טָמֵא הוּא בְּדַד יֵשֵׁב מִתּוֹץ לְמַחֲנֵה מוֹשְׁבֵי:</p>

## 1. ויקרא רבה פרשה ז:א

רבי אחא בשם רבי חנינא בר פפא: שלא יהיו ישראל אומרים לשעבר היינו מקריבין קרבנות ומתעסקין בהן, עכשיו שאין קרבנות מהו להתעסק בהם? אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא, הואיל ואתם מתעסקים בהם, מעלה אני עליכם כאלו אתם מקריבין אותן.

### Leviticus Rabbah chapter 7

R. Aha said in the name of R. Hinena bar Pappa: in the time that the Temple stood Israel would offer all the sacrifices that are in the Torah; now [that there is no Temple], why should they involve themselves with them? The Lord, Blessed be He said to them: Since you are involved with them [in study], I will consider it to be *as if* you offered them.

## 2. ויקרא רבה פרשה טז

[ב] מי האיש החפץ חיים וגו' (תהלים לד, יג).

מעשה ברוכל אחד שהיה מחזר בעיירות הסמוכות לציפורי והיה מכריז ואומר "מן דבעי למיזבן סם חיים ייתי ויסב". עאל להדה עכברא קרב לביתיה דר' ינאי הוה יתיב ופשט בטרקליניה. שמעיה מכריז "מן דבעי למיזבן סם חיים". אודיק עליה ר' ינאי אמ' ליה: "תא סוק להכא זבין לי". אמ' ליה: "לא את צריך ליה, לא אנת ולא דכוותך". אטרח עליה סליק לגביה הוציא לו ספר תילים הראה לו פסוק מי האיש החפץ חיים אהב ימים לראות טוב (תהלים לד, יג), מה כת' בתריה? נצר לשונך מרע ושפתיך מדבר מרמה. סור מרע ועשה טוב בקש שלום ורדפהו (שם) /תהלים ל"ד/ פסוקים יד - טו).

אמ' ר' ינאי: כל ימיי הייתי קורא את המקרא הזה ולא הייתי יודע היכן הוא פשוט עד שבא רוכל זה והודיעו, מי האיש החפץ חיים.

אמ' ר' חגי: אף שלמה מכריז ואו' שומר פיו ולשונו שומר מצ' נפשו (משלי כא, כג), שומר מצרעת נפשו.

לפיכך משה מזהיר את ישראל וא' להן זאת תהיה תורת המצורע, תורת המוציא רע.

“Who is the man who is eager for life, who desires years of good fortune?” (Psalms 34.13)

A story of a traveling merchant (*rochel*) who would go around to all the towns close to *Tsippori* and would declare, saying: “All who want to buy an elixir of life should come and take!” He came to the town of *Akhbara* and came close to the house of Rabbi Yannai who was sitting and learning in his dining room. He heard him declaring, “All who want to buy an elixir of life...” Rabbi Yannai examined him and said to him: “Come here and sell some to me.”

Said the merchant to Rabbi Yannai: “No, you don’t need it. Neither you, nor those like you.”

Rabbi Yannai pressed him, so he came close to him, brought out a book of Psalms and showed him the verse, “Who is the man who is eager for life, who desires years of good fortune?” What is

written (in the verses) right after it? “Guard your tongue from evil, your lips from deceitful speech, shun evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it”.

Said Rabbi Yannai: My whole life, I have been reading that verse and I did not know how to explain it until this traveling merchant came and pointed it out, “Who is the man who is eager for life...”

Said Rabbi Haggai: Even Solomon declared, saying, “He who guards his mouth and his tongue from the troubles (*tsarot*) of his soul.” He who guards from the leprosy (*tsara’at*) of his soul.

Therefore, Moses warned Israel saying to them, “This is the law of the leper (*metzora*); the law of the one who utters evil reports” (*motzi shem rab*).

### 3. Leviticus Rabbah chapter 16

“Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin” (Ecclesiastes 5:5)

A

(1) R. Joshua b. Levi interpreted the verse in terms of those who pledge charity in public but do not give it.

**Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin**, do not give permission to one of your limbs to cause all your limbs to sin; your mouth causes your whole body to sin.

**And do not say before the messenger**, this is the sexton (*chazzan*) of the congregation.

**That it was an error**, I pledged, and I did not pledge.

**Why should God get angry at your voice?** At that voice that pledged but did not give.

**And destroy the work of your hands**, Even the small amount of property that you possess (lit. have in your hands), you will introduce confusion to them.

(2) R. Benjamin interpreted the verse in terms of pretenders of scholarship.

**Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin**, do not give permission to one of your limbs to cause all your limbs to sin; your mouth causes your whole body to sin.

**And do not say before the messenger**, this is the teacher (*rav*).

**That it was an error**, he acts as if he studied Miqra, but he did not study Miqra; he studied Mishnah, but did not study Mishnah.

**Why should God get angry at your voice**, At that voice that was insincere regarding the words of Torah.

**And destroy the work of your hands**, Even the small number of tractates that you have in our hands, you will introduce confusion to them.

(3) R. Hananiah interpreted the verse in terms of those that speak *lashon hara*.

**Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin**, do not give permission to one of your limbs to cause all your limbs to sin; your mouth causes your whole body to sin.

**And do not say before the messenger,** this is the angel of the body.

**That it was an error,** I said it, I did not say *lashon bara*.

**Why should God get angry at your voice,** At that voice that said *lashon bara*.

**And destroy the work of your hands,** Even the small number of limbs that you have in your body, you will introduce confusion to them.

(4) R. Mani interpreted the verse in terms of vows.

**Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin,** do not give permission to one of your limbs to cause all your limbs to sin; your mouth causes your whole body to sin.

**And do not say before the messenger,** this is the elder.

**That it was an error,** I vowed, I did not vow.

**Why should God get angry at your voice,** At that voice that apportioned but did not give.

**And destroy the work of your hands,** Even the small number of mitzvot that you have in your hands, you will introduce confusion to them.

(5) Our rabbis interpreted the verse in terms of Miriam.

**Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin,** do not give permission to one of your limbs to cause all your limbs to sin; your mouth causes your whole body to sin.

**And do not say before the messenger,** this is Moses

Thus we read, “He sent us a messenger (or angel) who freed us from Egypt.” (Numbers 20:16)

**That it was an error,** “for we have acted foolishly, and we have sinned” (Numbers 12:11)

**Why should God get angry at your voice?** At that voice

“And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and He departed.” (Number 12:9).

**And destroy the work of your hands**

Said R. Johanan: Miriam sinned with her mouth and all of her limbs were stricken.

Thus we read, “The cloud withdrew from the tent (and behold Miriam was leprous as snow)” (Numbers 12:10)

## B1

Said R. Joshua b. Levi:

A word is worth one *sela* and silence is worth two *selas*.

As we are taught, “Simeon his son said: All my life I grew up among sages and I found that silence alone is good for a person (lit. body); and study is not the essence, rather action; and whoever engages in excessive talking brings on sin.

## B2 (16.6)

Said R. Joshua b. Levi:

Five *torot* are written with regard to *metsora*: “This is the law (torah) of the plague of leprosy” (Lev. 13:59); This is the law (torah) of him in whom is the plague of leprosy” (Lev. 14:32); “This is the law

(torah) for all manner of plague of leprosy, and for a scall” (Lev. 14:54); “This is the law (torah) of leprosy” (Lev. 14:57).

And “This shall be the law (torah) of the leper” (Lev. 14:2) surrounds (them all).

The law of the one who offers evil reports, in order to teach you that anyone who speaks *lashon hara* transgresses the five books of the Torah.

Therefore, Moses warned Israel saying to them, “This is the law of the leper (*metsora*); the law of the one who utters evil reports” (*motsi shem ra*).

(Leviticus 14:2)