

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS:	Torah Tazria:	Leviticus 13:18-28
	Haftarah:	II Kings 5:5-7
	B'rit Chadasha:	Matthew 8:3

The priest is to pronounce him tahor.

[Leviticus 13:23(b)]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 119:97-104;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition No. 1, *Da'at* [Intimate Knowledge/Understanding]

Uvasar ki-yihyeh vo-v'oro shechin v'nirpa – If on flesh comes a boil that heals ... *v'hayah bimekom ha-sh'chin se'it levanah o v'heret levanah adamdamet* - and in the area where the boil was a blotch or bright reddish-white spot appears Leviticus 13:18-19a.

Boils? You remember *boils* – Hebrew *sh'chin* - don't you? Tender patches of swollen redness, a couple of centimeters in diameter, that initially appear as firm red bumps around a hair follicle infected a staph bacteria? Nasty sores that fill up with pus over the course of 4-7 days, then get soft and mushy and turn white around the top, rupture, ooze, and drain in the most painful and unsightly ways? Unpleasant, for certain – but not fatal.

Boils were one of the 'plagues' the Holy One sent to afflict the Egyptians after the leadership of that nation refused to let B'nei Yisrael go. In that case, after all Pharaoh's livestock died, and the carcasses were burned, exposure to the toxic ashes from the furnaces caused boil-like sores to develop on the skin of the Mitzrayim – especially the magicians in Pharaoh's court. Unpleasant, for certain – but not fatal. It was just to make a point. And so it is again – this time not with Egyptians, but with us. Unpleasant, for certain – but not fatal. And by no means forever. In fact, boils are the kind of thing that appear, run their course, and go away, all in just a few short days. If we exercise basic good hygiene – and follow the Holy One's directions, that is.

But wait. Before we get to that, didn't the Holy One say at *Marah* that He would '*put on [us] none of the maladies [He] put on the Egyptians*'? Yes, Beloved, He did. And that would clearly include *sh'chin* – i.e. boils. But if you remember how that all came down, you know that there were three very specific conditions to that promise. Do you remember the conditions? The first condition was: *If, as, when, and to the extent you diligently sh'ma the Voice of the Holy One your God.* The

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second condition was that we **asah** [i.e. build, form, give practical application to] **what is right in His sight. And the third condition was that we azan** [give ear to] **and sh'mar** [cherish, treasure, and carefully guard and safe-keep] **His Instructions. Exodus 15:26.**

So, if we have boils ... well, is it possible that some of us just might not be *sh'ma*-ing, *asah*-ing, *azan*-ing and *sh'mar*-ing the way our Bridegroom-King so gloriously called, redeemed, betrothed, inspired, and empowered us to? Could there be some 'putting off' or 'putting away' that we need to do. As Shaul of Tarsus said: ... ***Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man, that grows corrupt because of its deceitful fleshly lusts. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And put on the new man that was created by God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, let each of you speak truth to your neighbor, for we are all members of one another Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouth, but only what is good and needful for edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, ranting, and lashon ha ra be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another Ephesians 4:22 ff.***

As a result of listening to 'other voices' than the Holy One's Voice, following our hearts and intellects instead of the Holy One's Instructions, and regularly ingesting the toxic juices fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, humanity has developed quite a 'flesh problem'. It is time we learned how the Holy One wants us to recognize, diagnose, deal with, and heal it, don't you think? Welcome to the aliyah of toxic flesh eruptions!

Oh, That Pesky Fallen Human Flesh!

In *Tazria* the Holy One has shifted the focus of His Creative Genius from matters of diet, interaction with animals, and childbearing to some very intimate and personal matters. Suddenly the fine movements of the point of the scalpel of the Great Physician are being directed at the little spots, wrinkles, blemishes and defects in each of us that we would rather ignore and just try to hide.

The focus of the Holy One's Words is now squarely upon our *flesh*. He wants us to know that our flesh is not just a covering, but an early warning system. When viewed with the eyes of His Heart with the aid of the brilliant Light that emanates from His Presence, our flesh actually *tells the story of whatever is going on inside us*. Think of Adam and Chava and how after they ingested the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they suddenly '*realized they were naked*'. **Genesis 3:7.** Our flesh tells all. Our skin reveals our inner state. The Creator designed it to do just that.

What do eruptions of our flesh reveal? They tell our Creator – and anyone who walks in the Light of His Countenance – the story of exactly where our hearts, minds, and souls are at the moment on what I have come to call ‘the Great Continuum’.

The Great Continuum

What is the ‘Great Continuum’, you ask? It is the vast continuum of various levels of quality of life that a human being can experience. On the one end of this Great Continuum is the *optimal state* of human experience. This is *chayei olam* – i.e. ‘*life beyond the veil*’ – i.e. *life lived in the secret place of the Most High, abiding in the Shadow of our Bridegroom-King*. This consists of wholeness, wellness, integrity, and *shalom*. It flows naturally when we joyfully receive the Holy One’s love, humbly surrender to His Covenant, *sh’ma* His Beautiful Voice, and respond to His every movement as a Bride. This is the kind and quality of life He desires for us, and which comes from letting Him continually refresh and restore our souls. As we learn from the 23rd Psalm, He does this ‘refreshing and restoring’ work as, when, and to the extent we follow Him in paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake, as, when and to the extent we allow Him to comfort us as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, as, when and to the extent we trust Him to prepare a table for us in the presence of our enemies, as, when and to the extent we surrender to His anointing of our heads with oil, as, when, and to the extent we hold forth our cup for Him to fill to overflowing, and as, when and to the extent we cooperate with His guidance and empowerment to cause a substantive ‘wake’ of goodness and mercy to follow us all the days of our lives.

Ah, this is the ‘*life, and life more abundantly*’ state offered to us by Mashiach. See **Genesis 2:9, 15-16; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; and John 10:10(b)**. Such a life is *life well-lived* – a life of *abiding in the Vine* [**John 15:4-5**], weathering the storms of this world [**Matthew 7:16-27**], and bearing the *fruit of His indwelling Ruach* [**Galatians 5:22-26**]. This is the ‘walking in His Light’ side of the Great Continuum. **Exodus 13:21; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 89:15; Isaiah 2:5; Isaiah 60:1-3; and Ephesians 5:8**. This is the kind of life Kefa [commonly called Peter by English speakers of our day] described as *joy unspeakable and full of glory*. **I Peter 1:8-9**.

But alas, this is not always the quality of life we experience. Every continuum has an *opposite side*. As Adam and Chava discovered there are other qualities of life – qualities of life far different from that which our Creator offers us.

Trap doors of enticement and seduction constantly threaten to draw us away from the optimal life style described above. Snares of fleshly distraction, indulgence, and offense catch us up in a toxic vortex that pulls us toward the opposite end of

the spectrum. Enticements from the realm of the *tamei* and the cumulative effect of repetitive trauma from our interactions with the realm of the *chol* combine to lead us down a broad path toward destruction.

Like a midway at a cheesy amusement park, this broad path passes through multiple levels of enticements to folly all the way to the ‘dark side’ of the continuum – i.e. a state characterized by *extreme inner darkness, deafness to the Voice and blindness to the Ways of our Creator, and virtual death of identity, mission, and destiny.*

This ‘other’ state of quality of life does not come upon us all at once. It is the product of choices all along the way, leading from one phase of flesh eruption to another. Each phase of flesh eruptions along the Great Continuum has easily recognizable characteristics. It starts with restlessness and curiosity. It proceeds to conflicting loyalties and priorities. It progresses to ever increasing levels of inner turmoil. We begin to seethe with negative emotions. Everything becomes about ourselves – what we want and don’t want, what we like and dislike, and how things, and ideas – and ultimately *people* - make us feel. This leads to harassment and oppression by unclean spirits, which get drawn like flies to us by the chronic release of *tumah* through *lashon ha ra*. This leads to over-reaction, over-stimulation, over-thinking, over-sensitivity, hyper-sexualization, and over-indulgence of the baser appetites, urges and drives of the flesh. This leads to frustration, disappointment, disillusionment, sarcasm, cynicism, and depression. This in turn leads to rage/outrage, panic attacks, aggression, terror, hatred, despair, apathy, debilitating addictions, disease processes, oozing lesions of perceptible toxicity, and walking death.

Life on the dark side of the Great Continuum is the ultimate form of captivity. Fortunately the Holy One knows what we need, and offers us a way of escape, at every stage in the process and every point on the Great Continuum. All we have to do is open our eyes, see what He sees, and follow His protocols.

There Is None So Blind As He Who Refuses to See

It seems our Divine Bridegroom is not willing to play along forever with our little game of pretending not to see all the unsightly blemishes, spots and wrinkles we all have in abundance on our skin and on our souls. This is the season when He starts bringing to the surface and making us deal with all the disease-causing junk we have allowed to accumulate inside us, and which in the course of ordinary life we are totally content to ignore and tolerate if not embrace and pet *even if it is destroying us and the people around us*. Suddenly nothing is hidden from His Intimate Gaze. And it is *getting real uncomfortable up in here*.

His goal is never to find fault. His objective is never to embarrass. His way is never to accuse or nag. Absolutely everything He does or calls upon us to do is designed to bring forth and fan into flame the hidden sparks of potential for greatness that He knows are in us. He knows they are in us because He put them there. Absolutely everything He does – or calls upon us to do - is redemptive in purpose and effect, brilliantly designed to effectuate and seal our deliverance – and the deliverance of those within our households, neighborhoods, and communities - from the effects of the defilement lethality of the Great Continuum’s ‘dark side’. Everything the Great Husbandman of Heaven prunes from our lives is essential to maximize our fruitfulness. Every fleshly distraction or offense from which our High Priest cleanses us is an obstacle that hinders our ability – and/or our passion, energy, resources, and time - to function effectively as ambassadors of His Kingdom and as agents of His awesome redemptive love.

This glorious truth applies to the portions of the *Kedusha Discourse* that set out priestly skin inspection protocols, which we study today, every bit as much as it applies to the portions of the same Discourse that tell us to *be holy as He is holy* [Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:2, and 20:7, 26] and to *love our neighbor as ourselves* [Leviticus 19:18]. What He is doing with this entire download of wisdom and revelation is *empowering* all who will listen to throw off all that hinders and entangles and press forward to become all He has created us to be. All His words are Creative. All His life-instructions are destiny reshaping. And through these things He intends to cleanse and mature us to the point where the Friend of the Bride can pronounce us – and everything we touch - *tahor*.

Our Bridegroom-King has begun a great work in us. He has taken us out of the house of bondage, carried us to Himself on eagle’s wings, and betrothed us to Him forever. But our life in covenant – and our long season of functioning as His kingdom of priests to the nations and people groups of the world - has just begun. When it is all said and done we who have been called as the Holy One’s *am segulah*, His *mamleket ha-kohanim*, and His *goy kadosh* [Exodus 19:5-6] are supposed to have only one mark on our flesh and upon our souls – the seal of our Great King. We are not called to be *scarred survivors*; we are called to be *glorious overcomers*. We are called to be conformed to the Magnificent Image of our Bridegroom-King. And that conformity is to be complete – from the inside all the way out.

He who has begun a good work in us will be faithful to complete it; and we have the privilege, honor, and great joy of cooperating and co-laboring with Him as He does so. As we do so, we shine as lights in the world, and go from glory to glory to

glory. **Philippians 2:12-15**; see also **II Corinthians 3:18**.

But There Are Challenges Along the Way

Alas, shining as lights in the world and going from glory to glory are not ‘automatic’ upon deliverance from bondage. We have an important role to play in the process. We have choices to make. We have challenges to face. We have personal and community issues to deal with. We have obstacles and hindrances to overcome. That is why our participation in the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover Protocols – the process some theologians have chosen to call ‘sanctification’ – is so critically important. The Holy One knows the frailty of our fallen human frame. He knows the dullness of our fallen eyes, ears, and minds. He knows our susceptibility to the serpent’s song of seduction and our fallen flesh’s appetite for things of this world that can never satisfy. And He knows exactly what level of intervention – and strategic disruption of the *status quo* – it will take for us to successfully negotiate each milepost we encounter on the obstacle course of life, overcome, transcend, and let Him establish us firmly on the ‘Light, Life, Health, and Peace’ side of the Great Continuum.

Over time, the Holy One knows, we have a destructive tendency to actually grow comfortable with our spots, blemishes, wrinkles and defects. He knows that at the very least we become adept at covering our spots, blemishes, etc. up so others cannot see them. We put on fig leaves. We hide behind trees. We build fortresses of false identity. He knows we often foolishly buy the serpent’s lie that those things are actually parts of our identity. We embrace blemishes we cannot hide or ignore as just part of our unique personality. He knows that with other blemishes we just forget – or ignore the obvious fact [obvious to others, that is] that they are there.

The Good News is that He Who designed us, formed us, and knows our potential far better than we do loves us far too much – and has far too much invested in us – to let us wallow in spots, wrinkles, blemishes and defects forever. He is not willing to indulge our ‘emperor-has-no-clothes’ alternate reality games² – especially not

² The reference is to ‘*The Emperor’s New Clothes*’, a fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen and first published in 1837. It is about an emperor who cared only about his clothes and about showing them off. One day he heard from two swindlers that they could make the finest suit of clothes from the most beautiful cloth. This cloth, they said, also had the special capability that it was invisible to anyone who was either stupid or not fit for his position.

Unwilling to admit that he could not see the cloth – which he believed meant he was too unfit and stupid to see it, the vain emperor allowed himself to be dressed in the clothes for a procession through town. Afraid to be thought stupid and unfit, one by one the people of the town wildly praised the magnificent clothes of the emperor. Finally however a small child stated the obvious: “*But the emperor has no clothes!*” The emperor heard it and knew the child was correct, but held his head high and carried on with the procession anyway.

when we are entering and serving in His Courts. After all, our Divine Bridegroom of Heaven deserves a fitting helpmeet who has made herself ready, is without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, and is dressed in fine linen garments, pure and white. We still have an awfully long way to go. But He is an Absolute Genius at Makeovers. And if we will not give up, He will get us there.

In Your Light We See Light³

The presence of His Royal Personage in the midst of our camp has changed everything. When the Holy One's Manifest Presence took up habitation in our midst we entered a heightened state of spiritual awareness and responsibility. He is Light, and when His Presence comes, His Light reveals things that are usually hidden. The intense spiritual light that illuminates whatever and whoever the Radiant Face of our Bridegroom shines upon enables us – indeed compels us – to *see many things we could not see before*. And even with regard to things we could see dimly with our natural human vision before the *Abiding Presence of our King* came to dwell in our camp, we now find our perspective on such things has changed dramatically.

For example, in the glow of His Manifest Presence we are suddenly able to see 'spots' and 'blemishes' in ourselves that we never knew – and did not want to believe - existed. As it was only in the midst of a manifestation of the King's glory that Yeshayahu [Isaiah]⁴ could see that he had *tamei* lips, and dwelt in the midst of a people of *tamei* lips, so it is with us. We have become transparent. We cannot hide anything. Our first reaction may be, as Yeshayahu's was, to proclaim '*woe is me*', and to feel we are 'undone'. But there is good news. The good news is that, in our heightened state of awareness resulting from the abiding presence of His Holiness, the *Radiant One*, in our camp, not only can we see those blemishes, the Holy One has actually given us specific instructions to empower us to *deal with them in a meaningful way before they engulf and overwhelm us*.

Are You Seeing Any Spots Yet?

In today's study we examine the Holy One's loving instructions as to what is to happen when a member of the covenant community detects and is ready to let the Holy One deal with a 'spot or blemish'. Out of British prudishness and post-Enlightenment pragmatism the focus of the narrative in our English translations of Torah seems to be upon the 'skin'. In the Hebrew text however the focus is not upon the skin of a human being - which in Hebrew would be *ohr* - but is instead upon the '*flesh*' of a human being. The Hebrew word used is *basar*. While the term *basar* includes the skin, it is a much broader term. *Basar* encompasses every facet

³ This is a quote from Psalm 36:9[b].

⁴ See Isaiah 6:5.

of our earthly existence.

So the question goes beyond whether we have superficial blemishes on our skin – the question proceeds to a deeper level – *i.e.* whether we have destructive processes at work in our flesh. Do we harbor hatred, anger or offense? Are we eaten up with worry or fear? Are we wounded by trauma, by abandonment, by disappointment, by betrayal, or by rejection? Are we holding on to unforgiveness, self-righteousness and pride? Are we agreeing with lies the enemy of our souls has told us – directly or through the voices of family members, teachers, coaches, peers and the media - about our identity, our worth, our purpose, our destiny, what will bring us joy, and what will bring us life?

And even if we have begun a new life in the Covenant since these things first embedded themselves in our **basar**, is there a destructive process at work around those old wounds that is adversely affecting our attitude, our speech, our actions, and our relationships in real time?

If we know what to inspect for, it is easy to tell our inner condition from observing our flesh. As Shaul taught the people of Galatia, the works of the flesh are evident. There is a hierarchy – or, more accurately, a series of phases of flesh eruptions that tell us where we are at any given moment. See **Galatians 5:19-21**.

The Seven Levels of ‘Flesh’ Eruptions That We Have to Learn to Recognize and Deal With

Level one flesh eruptions involve harmful, flesh-driven admixtures and soul ties [i.e. adulterous relationships; intertwining with people in ways inconsistent with the Plan of the Holy One for their lives]. **Galatians 5:19**.

Level two flesh eruptions take the form of indulgence of and surrendering to the lusts of the eye and of the flesh. **Galatians 5:19**.

Level three flesh eruptions involve immersing one’s self in the realm of tamei animals, consumables, people, objects, situations and conditions. **Galatians 5:19**.

Level four flesh eruptions involve engaging in lewd, profane, immodest dress, looks, words, conversations, stories, and behaviors.

Level five flesh eruptions involve succumbing to idolatry [the veneration of or fascination with anything or any one in the manner or to the level which should be reserved for the Creator] and dabbling in sorcery. **Galatians 5:20**.

Level six flesh eruptions involve the harboring and expression of hatred,

contentiousness, jealousy, wrath/outrage, pursuing selfish ambitions, causing or fomenting dissensions, heresies, and feeling and expressing envy toward another person, another economic or social class, or another people group. **Galatians 5:20.**

Level seven flesh eruptions involve even more extreme self-destructive and/or anti-social behavior like attacking others [with attitudes, with words, or aggressive behavior], drunkenness, revelries, and the like. **Galatians 5:21.**

Do you recognize these types of flesh eruption as the signs they really are? Are you able to discern of what kind and level of *tumah* each such kind of eruption is diagnostic? Do you know how to approach people exhibiting such signs wisely, in love, and without revulsion? And are you familiar with the protocols the Divine Bridegroom has designed to bring redemption and cleansing to those caught in the throes of such eruptions of the flesh?

Have Our Past Experiences Rendered Us Toxic?

Here is how the Voice of the Holy One begins this important section of the *Kedusha* Discourse:

Uvasar ki-yihyeh vo-v'ohro shechin v'nirpa
If the flesh develops an eruption in the skin, and it is healed,
V'hayah b'mekom ha-sh'chin set levanah
and in the place where the eruption was there comes a white swelling
o vaheret levanah adamdamet
or a bright spot, reddish-white in color,
v'nir'ah el-ha-kohen
then it is to be shown to the priest.
[Leviticus 13:18-19]

Please note that we are now being told by our Bridegroom-King to do is examine our *skin* [in Hebrew, *ohr*] in the areas where we previously had an *eruption* [in Hebrew, *sh'chin*] in our *flesh* [in Hebrew, *basar*] that we think has healed. Why are we to look at the site of that old wound? We are to look to see if there is evidence of anything toxic going on in our *flesh* as a result of that old condition?

What is an 'Eruption' [in Hebrew, Sh'chin]?

As stated previously, the Hebrew word *sh'chin* is often translated into English as 'boil'. That is valid, of course. But the Hebraic idea of a *sh'chin* is much more broad. A *sh'chin* is any area of life in which our *flesh* – not just our *skin* - has ever erupted. It includes every time, place and life circumstance in which we have ever lost our sense of shalom and indulged in a 'flesh-out' moment – i.e. what I like to call a '*flesh-volcano*'. That includes every *angry outburst* – as well as *every time we reacted to some person or situation out of fear, worry, or offense* instead of out

of Heavenly wisdom and compassion.

Sh'chin includes every act of physical aggression [offensive or defensive in perspective] in which we have ever participated - or from which we have suffered at the hands of someone else. *Sh'chin* also includes every episode that has triggered from us an outburst of complaint, accusation, criticism, condemnation, cursing or any other form of negative speech. Additionally, *sh'chin* also includes each and every time and circumstance in life in which we have voluntarily surrendered to lust, greed, hatred, or other out-of-control appetite or urge – or been used, abused, or victimized by someone else doing the same.

We have all experienced such things. We all have a *sh'chin* or two – or two thousand – in our past. Most of us just assume that now that we have calmed down a little, such that the *volcano of flesh* is no longer spewing ash and releasing rivers of molten lava all over us and everybody around us, and we have perhaps even talked or prayed it through and received some level of closure, all is now well. But is it really?

Is Our Sh'chin Really Healed?

Or is Another Eruption Brewing Deep in the Magma Reservoir of Our Volcano?

The Holy One wants to help us. He wants to empower us to make sure that all the old volcanoes in our heart, soul and mind are *really healed* – and are not just awaiting another stressor to start another *tumah*-oozing eruption. While we have survived our *sh'chin* – have we overcome it? He calls us to be overcomers, not mere survivors. He calls us to be people of '*never again*'.

So, here are a couple of questions we might need to consider:

1. Do we still have *flesh-out triggers* that the enemy of our soul can manipulate to our detriment and the detriment of the people closest to us – i.e. 'buttons' that people or situations can push to cause a repeat of the flesh volcano eruptions of the past?
2. Is our *way of thinking about and approaching life* - and/or *the way we think about and relate to people* - still adversely affected by the subconscious memories associated with the trauma, wounds, and disappointments we suffered:
 - [a] the homes in which we grew up,
 - [b] at the schools and religious institutions we attended in previous years;
 - [c] in connection with past relationships that turned out badly,,
or

[d] in our own private prison of untamed appetites, drives, and urges, not-to-mention un-surrendered attitudes, opinions, hopes, aspirations, fears, and emotions? And:

3. When the pressures and stresses of life come upon us, do the same old negative Serpent-speak outbursts of blame, accusation, and negativity we heard and believed before we met the Bridegroom-King start to cycle back through our minds and slip out of our mouths?

In Leviticus 13:20 the Holy One tells the priest to look for two signs that the site of a past *sh'chin* is for us still a source of potentially destructive levels of *tumah*.

V'ra'ah ha-kohen v'hineh mar'eha shafal min-ha-ohr
and if, when the priest sees it, it indeed appears deeper than the skin

use'arah hafach lavan
and its hair has turned white,

v'time'o ha-kohen nega-tzara'at
and *tamei* the priest – it is *Tzara'at*.

The first sign is that of *unevenness*. If the area of the old *sh'chin* is deeper – more indented – then the rest of our skin, that is a sign that requires further observation. We are supposed to be balanced, level, even, and plumb in our approach to life and people. We are not to favor or be weak in any area of service. If we have an indentation – a weak spot in our Walk or a blind spot in our Love – it should cry out to us ‘service engine soon’! If we do not deal with it, HE WILL. He loves us too much to see us out of balance, un-level, uneven or out of plumb in any area of our calling.

Similarly, the Holy One tells us that if there has been a *discoloration of the hair* in the area of the old *sh'chin*, that is a serious warning sign that demands attention. In Hebraic thought and Biblical symbolism, the hair [Hebrew *se'ar*] refers to our degree of dedication of passion, energy, and strength for and unto Him. For hair to lose its color and turn white would mean that the dedication of passion, energy, and strength unto Him in the area in which we previously erupted means that while we may have survived the last eruption, we have not overcome it. It means we are sensitive, weak, and vulnerable in that area. It means a level of death and decay has set in. That, in turn, means that the enemy has a foothold in our life from which to wreak havoc whenever he wills. And that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Still there is no judgment or disqualification. The level of the threat posed - and the level of mercy, compassion and healing grace that needs to be applied - must still be assessed by a caring ambassador of the King. Hence the Holy One says that

if either of the two danger signs are present upon the first inspection, all it means is that:

V'hisgiro ha-kohen shiv'at yamim

Then the priest is to sagar [i.e. close, enclose] him/it seven days.

The Separation Protocol

If the *kohen* sees an indentation or discoloration of the hair in the area of an old *sh'chin* the Holy One's instruction is to confine the affected person to his or her home for seven days. There is no declaration to the public. There is no shame. There is no condemnation. There is just an opportunity – and plenty of time – afforded to the person who has a destructive process at work in his body at the site of an old flesh-eruption to work the situation out himself or herself through prayer, surrender, meditation, fasting, etc.

At the end of the seven days a second examination will occur. It is only after the second examination [i.e. upon the testimony of the second witness] that a binding determination will be made. The caring priest is then to visit the affected person again, inspect the area and see if the alarming condition has gotten better, gotten worse, or remains the same. The instructions of the Holy One in this regard are:

V'im-pasoh tifseh ba'ohr

And if it should then be spread over the skin,

v'time ha-kohen oto nega hi

*then the priest is to pronounce him **tamei**. It is tzara'at.*

V'im-tachteyha ta'amod ha-baheret lo fasatah

But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread,

tzarevet ha-sh'chin hi v'tiharo ha-kohen

*it is the scar of the infection; and the priest is to pronounce him **tahor**.*

The Burn Unit

One of the most painful and potentially dangerous injuries a person can experience is a burn. In Hebrew the word is *mich'vat*, *mem*, *kof*, *vav*, *tav*, a noun form of the primitive verb root *kavah*⁵. A burn is a form of traumatic tissue damage caused by direct contact with fire, intense heat, prolonged exposure to sunlight, caustic chemicals, lightning, etc. Modern medicine classifies burn injuries by degree of severity. Burns affecting only the outer layer (epidermis) of the skin are classified as first-degree burns. Burns that extend beyond the epidermis into the layer of skin tissue beneath it (the dermis) are classified as second-degree burns. Burns that go even deeper, damaging a person's skin in the hypodermis area, and/or damage underlying tissues or organs, are called third-degree burns. In virtually all cases,

⁵ Kavah is *kof*, *vav*, *hey*. Strong's Hebrew word #3554, it is pronounced kaw-vaw'.

the area of the burn experiences a traumatic loss of fluid in the affected blood vessels, resulting in some level of swelling and blistering. Burns often lead to infection, due to damage to the skin's protective barrier.

Our skin contains nerve endings, blood vessels, hair follicles, and sweat and sebaceous [oil-producing] glands. When we receive a burn wound, all of these are, potentially at least, adversely affected.

The Holy One intends for us to follow a similar two-inspection protocol with regard to burn injuries as He told us to follow in regard to areas of old *sh'chin*. He really wants us to be healed. He really wants us to hear the pronouncement that we are *tahor*. Indeed, the reality of it is that He wants these things far more for us than we do for ourselves.

Are you healed? Are you willing to be used as a vessel of healing for others? Have you overcome and transcended the eruptions and firestorms of your life? Are you willing to be used as an encourager and exhorter for those who are still struggling to do so? Are you ready to put on fine linen, clean and white? Are you ready to devote your life to lovingly, humbly, with a servant's heart and a friend's touch, helping others do the same? If you are willing, He is able and anxious to empower you. Just surrender to the process, the protocol, and the plan of the Beautiful and All-Wise One Who knows you best and loves you most.

Questions for Today's Study

1. What two kinds of 'spots' and wrinkles in His People does the Holy One address in today's aliyah of Torah?
2. What do you think is the redemptive purpose of the Holy One with regard to the following parts of the protocol set out in Torah for dealing with these two kinds of 'spots' and 'wrinkles':
 - a. the affected person seeking out a priest to inspect the spot?
 - b. The first inspection?
 - c. The warning sign of an indention or uneven place?
 - d. The warning sign of hair turned white in an affected area?
 - e. The seven days of isolation?
 - f. The second inspection by the priest?
 - g. The priest's declaration of '*tahor*'?
 - h. The priest's declaration of '*tzara'at*'?
3. In our haftarah readings thus this week we have already been introduced to Na'aman, a God-fearing Aramean [Syrian] general. We have learned that in order to

chasten His people in the Northern Kingdom of Israel the Holy One actually gave Na'aman and his army a series of victories over the Covenant people, in the course of which victories Na'aman decided to take some Hebrew slaves. But we have also discovered that the victories the Holy One allowed Na'aman to enjoy on behalf of his pagan king have not come without a price. In the course of his dealings with the Hebrew people – particularly since forcing some of them into slavery - Na'aman has been stricken by the Holy One with *tzara'at*. In the verses we read yesterday Na'aman received word from a Hebrew girl he had taken as a servant that 'there is a prophet in Israel'. She was referring to Elishahu [Elisha] – to whom the Holy One had given the wisdom of Torah to heal *tzara'at*. Na'aman has therefore gone to his king, the pagan king of Aram [Syria], seeking permission to go to Israel to seek healing for his *tza'arat*. Now the narrative continues:

Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

*So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver,
six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.
Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said,*

*Now be advised, when this letter comes to you,
that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his tzara'at.*

*And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter,
that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and make alive,
that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his tzara'at?
Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me."*

[II Kings 5:5-7]

[A] How did the King of Israel react when Naaman came with his message from the King of Aram?

[B] What was Elishahu's reaction when he found out?

[C] Why do you think Elishahu the prophet would not meet with Naaman?

[D] Why was Naaman angry?

[E] How did Naaman expect Elishahu to try to heal him?

[F] What had to happen in Naaman before he could be healed?

4. Our B'rit Chadasha reading for today consists of Yeshua's reaction when a man with *tza'arat* approached him, worshipped him, and said, *Adon, if you want to, you can make me tahor*. Here is how Mattitiyahu [Matthew] records the Master's response:

Yeshua stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying,

"I want to. Be tahor."

And immediately his tzara'at was cleansed.

[Matthew 8:3]

[A] What did Yeshua do that was different from what the Aharonic priest was to do according to the instructions we read in parsha *Tazria*?

[B] What did Yeshua do that was different from what Elishahu the prophet did

in connection with Na'aman.

*May the marvelous love of the Holy One invade your life today,
and may your garments be made spotless, as white as fine linen.
And may you be granted a place near Yeshua at the wedding banquet.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 119:97-104

*How love I your torah! It is my meditation all day.
Your mitzvot make me wiser than my enemies, for your mitzvot are always with me.
I have more understanding than all my teachers,
For your testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged, because I have kept your precepts.
I have kept my feet from every evil way,
that I might observe your word.
I have not turned aside from your ordinances, for you have taught me.
How sweet are your promises to my taste, more than honey to my mouth!
Through your precepts, I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.*