



The Whites of Tzaraat

Tzara'at refers to the spiritual affliction that had physical manifestation on the body, clothing, or one's house. *Masechet Negaim* begins by discussing *tzara'at* that appears on one's skin. The first *Mishnah* teaches that the *nega* (mark) must be one of four shades of white. A shade duller, would be not be considered a *nega*. The *Mishnah* explains that these shades are "two that are four". We have seen this expression a few times in our study of *Mishnayot*. It means that two of the shades are *avot*, learnt directly from the *Torah*, while the other two are *toladot*, derived. The *Bartenura* explains that the terms *se'et* and *baheret* mentioned in the *Torah* refer to the two *avot*, while the term *sapachat* mentioned between them, implies that each have a *toladah*. The *Mishnah* then continues with the debate between *R' Meir* and the *Chachamim* classify the different shades. While, according to the *Bartenura*, they appear to agree on the four shades, they argue regarding two of them, as to which is classified as the *av* and which is the *toladah*.

The *Bartenura* explains that the debate is important as it impacts which colours can combine. To explain, the minimum size of a *nega* is a *gris* (bean). If a mark that is that size is made up of those two colours that can combine, then it is can be considered a *nega tzara'at*. The *Bartenura* explains that two *avot* or an *av* and its own *toladah* can combine, whereas two *toladot* or an *av* and a *toladah* of the other *av* cannot.

The *Rambam* however maintains that all the four shades can combine with one another. If that is the case, is there a consequence of the debate in our *Mishnah*?

The *Mishnah Achrona* explains that for one to be qualified to assess *negaim*, they must be able to identify and name each of the different shades. Considering that the debate in our *Mishnah* is about the classification of the

different shades, it would impact the assessment of an individual expertise.

The *Lechem Shamayim* (1:3) explains that having a sound knowledge of the classification is necessary as it demonstrates a level of expertise, so that mistakes will not be made. For example, one might err in combing a *bohak* (a duller white) with one of the four shades and make someone *tameh* when they are really *tahor*. The *Lechem Shamayim* adds that there are even shades brighter than the snow colour, the brightest of the four, that also do not combine which one might combine in error. The reverse is also true, that one might mistake one of the four shades with a *bohak* and make someone *tahor* who is really *tameh*.

The *Aruch Hashulchan* (*Ha'Atid, Negaim* 8:11) however adds that there is *halachic* consequence of classifying the different *negaim*, even if they would normally all combine to make someone *tameh*. The *Mishnah* (7:1) discusses *negaim*, that despite having the qualities that would render them *tameh*, are *tahor*. Examples include, if someone converted and had a pre-existing *nega*; a *ketan* that was born with a *nega*; and *nega* that develops in the folds of the skin and then skin eventually seperated. The *Tana'im* in the next *Mishnah* discuss, that if the white colour changes in those cases, whether we would now treat the mark as a *nega tzaraat* and make it *tameh*. *R' Elazar Ben Azarya* maintains that it makes no difference – it is still *tahor*. *R' Elazar ben Chisma* maintains that if it changes to a brighter shade then it is *tameh*. *R' Akiva* however argues that any change in colour would mean that the *nega* would need to be assessed. The *Rambam* (*Tumat Tzaraat* 6:4) rules like *R' Akiva*. The *Aruch Hashulchan* therefore explains that if one is unable to discern properly between these four colours, then they might make an error in this case.

Revision Questions

אהלות י"ג: ג' – י"ח:

- What are the six cases of ploughed fields that had sources of *tumat met* in them that do not result in being a *beit ha'pras*? (י"ג: י"ח)
- What is the law regarding a field into which the soil of a *beit ha'pras* was washed? (י"ד: י"ח)
- What is the law regarding the attic of a house built in a field in which the location of a grave is unknown? (י"ה: י"ח)
- Explain the debate regarding the minimum measure of the soil from a *beit ha'pras* to be a source of *tumah*. (י"ה: י"ח)
- What other soil has the same measure? (י"ה: י"ח)
- What are the three opinions regarding how grapes from a vineyard in a *beit ha'pras* can be gathered and pressed and remain *tahor*? (י"ז: י"ח)
- What are the three types of a *beit ha'pras* and how do they differ from one another? (י"ח: ב"ד)
- Explain the debate regarding the first category. (י"ח: ב')
- How can a *sde bochin* be checked? (י"ח: ד')
- For what purpose does checking the field help and for what purpose does it not help? (י"ח: ד')
- In what two ways can a *beit ha'pras* be purified? (י"ח: ה')
- What two methods does *R' Shimon* add? (י"ח: ה')
- How can one pass through a *beit ha'pras* without becoming *tameh*? (י"ח: ו')
- What is the law regarding one who travels outside Israel through the mountains? Through the sea? (י"ח: ו')
- What is a *Shunit*? (י"ח: ו')
- What is the law regarding fields in *Surya* with respect to *tumah*, *ma'asrot* and *shmittah*? (י"ח: ז')
- In what circumstances does a property occupied by a *goi* in *Eretz Yisrael* require checking for *tumah*? (What case is the exception?) (י"ח: ז')
- Provide the three opinions regarding the areas that required checking. (י"ח: ח')
- What are *itz't'vaniyot* and can they have the status of a *mador goyim*? (י"ח: ח')
- What does *R' Shimon ben Gamliel* rules does not have the status of *mador goyim*? (י"ח: ט')
- Which location was purified by the *Chachamim*? (י"ח: ט')
- Which location was purified by *Rebbi* and his *Beit Din*? (י"ח: ט')
- Which ten places do not have the status of *mador goi'im*? (י"ח: י')

נגעים א': א'

- Explain the following statement: (א': א')
מראות נגעים שגלים שהן ארבעה...
- Explain the debate regarding the previous question. (א': א')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
21 February ט' אדר	22 February י' אדר	23 February י"א אדר	24 February י"ב אדר	25 February י"ג אדר	26 February י"ד אדר	27 February ט"ו אדר
Negaim 1:2-3	Negaim 1:4-5	Negaim 1:6-2:1	Negaim 2:2-3	Negaim 2:4-5	Negaim 3:1-2	Negaim 3:3-4

