



Volume 6. Issue 33

## Wisdom in Upholding the Words of Chachamim

Chapter nine discusses in greater depth *tzara'at* of *shchin* (boils of inflammations) and *michva* (burns). This type of *tzara'at* sighting is only significant if the *nega* appears when the *shchin* or *michva* has already begun to heal and a thin layer of skin has formed over them. This form of *tzara'at* differs from a regular skin affliction in that there are only two indications that the person is a *metzora* *muchlat* (confirmed *metzora*); the *nega* has spread or two white hairs have appeared.

A fascinating question is asked of *R' Eliezer* in the third *Mishnah*. What is the status of person if a *shchin* the size of a *sela* is found on the palm of a person's hand, containing a *nega* the same size? The problem is that hairs do not grow on the palm of the hand. Furthermore, spreading is only an indication of *tumah* if it spreads within the *shchin* and not onto the skin. In this case the *nega* has nowhere to spread. Consequently neither of the indications of *tumah* can occur, so why should *hesger* (isolation) be required?

*R' Eliezer* responds that it is possible that the *nega* might reduce in size (while greater than the minimum size of a *gris*). As the *nega* has not increase after the week of *hesger* the *kohen* will rule that he is *tahor*. The *nega* may then later spread again which would be an indication of *tumah*;<sup>1</sup> therefore *hesger* is necessary.<sup>2</sup> The *Mishnah Acharona* explains that those that asked knew of this possibility, they nonetheless wanted to know whether a double-doubt – that the *nega* would shrink then grow – still requires *hesger*.

This question was followed with an even more complex one. What if the *shchin* was originally the size of a *gris* and contained a *nega* of equal size? In this case, if the *nega* shrunk it would be smaller than the minimum size and if it later grew again it would

be treated as a new *nega*. In such a case, spreading is not an indication of *tumah*, as the *nega* must undergo *hesger* first. To this question, *R' Eliezer* responds, "I have not heard." The *Bartenura* explains that he had learnt from his teachers that in such a case the person must still undergo *hesger*, but *R' Eliezer* had not heard the reason why. The *Tifferet Yisrael* importantly adds that *R' Eliezer* never taught anything that he had not learnt explicitly from his teachers. It was possible that the rule was a *g'zeirat ha'katuv*, a decree authorised by the *Torah*, without a readily available logic to explain it.<sup>3</sup>

After gaining permission to speak, *R' Yehuda* offered a solution. He suggested that perhaps another *shchin* would develop next to the first and if the *nega* would spread to that one, then it would be an indication of *tumah*. *R' Eliezer* responded to the suggestion, "You are wise, for you upheld the words of the *Chachamim*."

There are two ways of understanding *R' Eliezer* response, both of which appear in the *Tosfot Yom Tov*. The second explanation provided is that *R' Eliezer* is stating that "You are exceedingly wise as you did not become overwhelmed or confused by the difficulties that stood to dismantle their words." From here we see that upholding the *Chachamim's* rule is the outcome, and the wisdom is the way *R' Yehuda* achieved it. The first explanation in the *Tosfot Yom Tov* however, is that "you are wiser than had you destroyed their words." One can understand that *R' Yehuda ben Beteira's* wisdom is found in his entire approach. Faced with the difficulty, he was single-minded in find the way of building and not destroying. Finding the truth and not dismissing it. "You upheld the words of the *Chachamim*" was the source of his wisdom.

*Yisrael Yitzchak Bankier*

<sup>1</sup> As spreading after *p'tur* is a sign of *tumah*.

<sup>2</sup> As explained by the *Bartenura*.

<sup>3</sup> Alternatively the *Mishnah Acharona* adds that perhaps his teachers ruled that *hesger* was required as they were doubtful that reason provided by *R'*

*Yehuda ben Beteira* was reason for *hesger*. Therefore the ruling might be based on a doubt.

## Revision Questions

נגעים ח' – ח' – י' ח'

- If *tzara'at* has covered a person, then receded and then covered again, when is the person *tameh* and when are they *tahor*? (ח:ח)
- What is the difference between a *metzora musgar* and a *metzora muchlat*? (ח:ח)
- Explain the debate regarding a case where a person had *tzara'at* covering his body with a *michya*, and then it covered his body, and then receded from *roshei eivarim*? (ח:ט)
- List two cases where a person ultimately was covered in *tzara'at* when presented to the *kohen*, where the hesitation in presenting resulted in stringency and a leniency. (ח:י)
- What is *shchin*? (א:ט)
- What is *michva*? (א:ט)
- What are their indications of a *metzora muchlat*? (א:ט)
- Can *schin* and *michva* combine with each other? With a *nega* on skin? (ב:ט)
- When specifically can *schin* and *michva* be *tameh* if a *nega* is found inside them? (ב:ט)
- What is the law regarding a *schin* that contains a *baheret* exactly its size? Why? (ג:ט)
- What are the two indication of *tumah* for *netakim*? (א:י)
- Explain the debate regarding the definition of “*dak*”? (א:י)
- Explain the debate regarding the case whether the yellow hairs can precede the *netek*. (ב:י)
- Can the yellow hairs be scattered? On the edge of the *netek*? (ב:י)
- What is the law if two black hairs are present in a *netek*? (ג:י)
- How close from the edge of the *netek* must they be for the law to apply? (ג:י)
- Does the same law apply if a black and a white hair are present? (ג:י)
- Explain the debate regarding whether yellow hairs that preceded the *netek* can have the same status as black hairs? (ד:י)
- How (and when) is the *netek* shaved? (ה:י)
- What is the law if a *netek* spreads then receded to what it was then spreads again? (ה:י)
- When are two *netakim*, side-by-side that combine, *tameh* and when are they *tahor*? (ו:י)
- What other case is similar to the one in the previous question and how are they different? (ו:י)
- Explain the three opinions regarding a case of a *netek* that was *muchlat*, then black hairs appeared, then disappeared? (ז:י)

## Local Shiurim

### Sunday -Thursday

After maariv  
Mizrachi Shul

### Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha  
Beit Ha'Roeh

## Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
4 <sup>th</sup> October ט' תשרי סוכות Negaim 10:9-10	5 <sup>th</sup> October י' תשרי Negaim 11:1-2	6 <sup>th</sup> October י"א תשרי Negaim 11:3-4	7 <sup>th</sup> October י"ב תשרי Negaim 11:5-6	8 <sup>th</sup> October י"ג תשרי Negaim 11:7-8	9 <sup>th</sup> October י"ד תשרי Negaim 11:9-10	10 <sup>th</sup> October ט"ו תשרי שמיני עצרת Negaim 11:11-12

