**PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORA**

יג, יב: ואם פרוח תפרח הצרעת בעור וכסתה הצרעת את כל עור הנגע מראשו ועד רגליו לכל מראה עיני הכהן

יג: וראה הכהן והנה כסתה הצרעת את כל בשרו וטהר את הנגע כולו הפך לבן טהור הוא

יד: וביום הראות בו בשר חי יטמא

We see the application of this pasuk in Mishnayos Negaim, פרק ח משנה ז. According to the **Bartenura**, if a man comes in entirely white, he needs הסגר. If one white hair comes out on his skin, he is made into a מוחלט. Otherwise, he’s fine and you send him home. If he gets sick afterward, then you put him into מוחלט immediately. Then in mishna ח: if he became all white after being tahor (meaning he went through the process above, was declared tamei, and then his whole body became white all at once again), he is tamei. After being tamei (meaning, he already had white spots and was declared tamei, and then it spread over his entire body), he is tahor. The **Rambam** in פ"ז of הל' טומאת צרעת says this as well (they argue about the point of “ראשי איברים” and what that means), that if he has a spot on his skin that is not white, he is tamei, but as soon as he becomes all white, he is tahor. He can go from tamei to tahor, back and forth, as many times as it happens.

Why would this be tahor? According to the **Yalkut Reuvaini**, this was one of the questions that Korach asked Moshe Rabbeinu, and was convinced that the Torah could not have been given by Hashem because he couldn't understand it at all. If a spot that is white makes a person tamei, certainly a person whose entire body is white... it seems this person should be the most טמא! The **Ibn Ezra** and the **Tur** say the נגע has already come out and that's why it's spread throughout the entire body. It's very shallow and therefore does not affect the person as much. The **Paanach Razah** says it's like a river: in the areas that the river appears very wide, it is actually very shallow. The נגע will not affect him as is. The **Pardes Yosef** adds on that טומאה that cannot be seen is much more dangerous than outlying טומאה - you don't really know what you're looking for when it's hiding, as opposed to surface טומאה which you can clearly see and stay away from. "Keep your enemies closer..."

The **Be'er Mayim Chaim** (quoted by the **Shaarei Aharon**) says the reason why is because צרעת

on one limb makes that limb as if it is dead. If it's on the whole body, it's impossible that the whole body is dead, since the person is clearly alive! Must be it's not a problem.

The **Netziv** says differently: this entire halacha is a is a chok that makes no sense. The **Rabbeinu Bechaye**

also says this in Parshas Chukas.

Nonetheless, says the **Netziv**, we can certainly understand something about the purification process. We do not say וטהרו הכהן but rather וטהר את הנגע - meaning the person is not tahor at all, but the mark that he has is tahor. The point of all יסורין is to be an eye opener for you that Hashem is watching and you should do teshuva before Hashem reveals your sin to everyone. That is the point of צרעת. But if the צרעת fills up his entire body it's too late, everyone already knows about it. The guy still needs help and a כפרה but the נגע he received is not actually טמא.

The **Ram"a** in Toras Haolah (mentioned by **Talelei Oros**) and **Chasam Sofer** add that everyone will stay away from this guy just like they would any other Apikores, knowing that he's a rasha gamur, so there's no need to save everyone else from this guy's evil deeds. They'll stay away on their own. However, if he has even one limb that is still clean, people will think he still has some good in him and go to him for advice thinking he's much better than he actually is. Such a person is sent out and is tamei!

In **Taam Vadaas**, Rav Shternbuch says someone who is entirely white has no דעת at all and is like a תינוק שנשבה and is therefore tahor, because he doesn't mean to sin, he just doesn't know. The white can almost stand for a sweet innocence that this person has, that he doesn't even know what he did wrong. only when he has some flesh showing - this shows that he has חיות and is trying to affect others - then we kick him out of the camp and we take away our rachamim from him.

In a bit of a different derech, the **Shach** says this is a siman that he is already נכנע. He must be so embarrassed to stand before others, so much so that he doesn't want to go out at all. He will certainly start to do teshuva as soon as he can. Hashem did this to him on purpose to make him do teshuva on his own.

The parents of a young man who had had a terrible disease that caused him to lose all of his hair came to **Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein**, upset that their son would have a very difficult time in shidduchim. They came to hear words of consolation, to understand how they could get through this tough situation without feeling lost or hopeless. Rav Yitzchok brought up this pasuk: if normally white skin and hairs are a sign of tumah, how can it be that when it spreads throughout the body the person is tahor? The **Chofetz Chaim** explains using navi, that we learn from tzaraas how to knock down our גאוה. In Malachim Bais, כא, יט, Eliyahu told Achav a nevuah that in the same place that the dogs licked up the blood of Navos (whom Achav had previously killed in order to steal his field) they would soon be licking his blood. When Achav Hamelech heard that, he tore his clothing, put on sackcloth, and fasted all day. When Hashem saw his teshuvah, Hashem reappeared to Eliyahu to tell him that evil would not happen to Achav. You see from here, says the Chofetz Chaim, how great is the middah of hachnaah, that it can remove terrible gezeiros from a person, even of death. For that reason, the Torah proscribes hisbodedus as the refuah for this man with tzaraas. He can no longer hang out with the same people that were involved in tamei things with him. Now he’ll be able to do teshuvah. When a person gets a spot here and a spot there, he can possibly think this is a just a מקרה; it means nothing. But when his whole body is filled with white, his heart is broken and he immediately has thoughts of teshuvah. He doesn’t need to be sent out, because by this time he must have already done teshuvah and he is now tahor and good, his הכנעה being his כפרה. Said Rav Yitzchok, I know this has been hard for you, but it seems there was a גזר דין of death for your son, and this disease with the הכנעה that came with it was the כפרה that allowed your son to live. He should have a full refuah shleimah and find his זיווג הגוןwithout any issues.

**Rav Moshe** says the opposite. Being entirely white does not show that he’s tahor. It shows that he’s a great sinner, so much so that tzaraas is not enough of a punishment for him, because he will never do teshuvah! He let it go this far already, we know he’s evil! A punishment in this world can only be done for a תועלת, and there is no תועלת here, since we see he won’t do anything. So he remains this white metzora without any hisbodedus allowed for him so that others can see and learn from him. He won’t get any better, but others will stay away from him and won’t want to have anything to do with him. This is similar to what we say in Sanhedrin יז that if everyone on the bais din say that he is chayiv, he is patur, with the siman being this pasuk: he’s too big of a rasha for anything that we can do to help, so we are not allowed to do anything at all.

**Rav Hirsh** has the best piece on tzaraas that is required reading for anyone who enjoys life. He explains how tzaraas is an eye opener for someone who has social issues, like lashon hara and everything else mentioned in ערכין טו. This person must leave the community and sit by himself so he realizes what he's missing and what he needs to do to rejoin Jewish halachic society. He then explains what happens when the whole person becomes white. The whole idea expresses the following: isolation is used to keep this guy away from everything tahor and from a society that bases itself on kedusha, so he doesn't affect them adversely, and he can improve himself. That only works if the isolation can bring about contemplation and better thoughts, which can only happen if this idea is fresh in his mind. Then he'll put up a fight and do something about it, to get himself better. If his turning completely white happened when he was tahor - he must be immediately sentenced and this quick enforced isolation will make him work on himself, thus he's tamei and goes into isolation. If it happens when he is already in isolation, then there is no hope for him to improve in his current state. He needs to build himself up again, give him the ability to see that life is worth living, and when that happens and he gets a bit better, then we can return him to his isolation state to bring about a true recovery and teshuvah.

There is a tremendous hint being taught to us here. In Sanhedrin 97b it says that Mashiach will come when מלכות תתהפך למינות. The siman for such a thing is this pasuk: כולו הפך לבן טהור הוא. The **Chasam Sofer** says a malchus that is entirely evil, like Paroh or Haman are by definition tahor because they were created in order to make the Jewish people do teshuva and they will certainly be destroyed. When they start to show raw flesh (meaning, they start to act kindly with the Jews) that's when we know it's tamei, because they are certainly doing this to eventually take us down. Achashveirosh was originally tamei by trying to get the Jews to join him in his seuda, then turned tahor by signing the edict to kill them all (causing us to do teshuva), and thus טיהרו הכהן!

**Rav Shwab** says that tumah does have any chiyus in and of itself. It takes life from “tahara.” If there is nothing tahor for it to take from, then it dies on its own. Therefore if the guy is entirely white, there’s nothing tahor for the tumah to grab onto, so it just dies out. Sheker always needs a bit of emes in order for it to stand.Wehn the evil people have nothing left to grab from tahara and kedusha, which cpould happen in the end of days, it will all die out and Moshiach will come.

The **Chasam Sofer** says in a different piece that it shows that the end is almost near. If the kingdoms out there are filled with מינות so much that they're destroying their own nations and not allowing anyone to live, it must be time for טהרה and we should expect Mashiach to show his face soon.

He also says that the מינות we refer to here is not just the Kings and officers, but the whole nation. The word מינות is a reference to Christians (what he calls the "belief in the Trinity"), which the **Ramban** says is hinted to in the pasuk בגוי נבל אכעיסם (in דברים לב, כא). Taking the word לבן and switching around the letters (הפך) makes it נבל - thus this pasuk is a perfect remez to that מאמר חז"ל.

**Rav Dessler** in his piece on הנהגת ה' in ח"ה page 292 says there are two different types of יסורין: 1) דרך עונש used for לימוד and תיקון as it says כאשר יאהב ה' יוכיח. 2) To make mitzvos even harder for the rasha, so that he is destroyed through his own evil deeds, like עבירה גוררת עבירה. הלעיטהו לרשע וימות. The first derech is for those who are ראוי to get it and do teshuva and learn from everything that happens to them. Those that won't do teshuva and consider this an act of war on G-d's part - this is the next step to their eventual self destruction. When their evil compounds to such a point where they can no longer get anything good in this world, they have to leave the world completely.

Sometimes the יסורין can work wonders and take away all of the evil from that rasha! The Nazis ימ"ש didn't allow us to have any pleasure in this world, and didn't give us any time to sin. That is a different גדר, known as כולו הפך לבן טהור הוא - those יסורין made us tzadikim and allows for a geulah to happen. This could be the explanation of a machlokes between Rebbe Eliezer and Rebbe Yehoshua on Sanhedrin צז:. Rebbe Eliezer says the Geulah will only happen when we do teshuva, while Rebbe Yehoshua insists it isn't dependant on that, אלא הקב"ה מעמיד להם מלך שגזירותיו קשה כהמן וישראל עושין תשובה. It sounds like Rebbe Yehoshua is contradicting himself, but really it means that through such יסורין that the other nations can bring upon us, we can erase all the רע from within and be completely tahor! Rebbe Eliezer feels the teshuva has to stem from within us, without outside factors. Rebbe Yehoshua is fine with a forced teshuva being מבטל our יצר הרע through יסורין.