

The Torah gives over the purification and atonement process for a metzora, one who had *tzoras* (a spotting disease). It gives the primary way and also a less expensive way, for a poorer person.

זֹאת תִּוְרַת אִשְׂרָאֵל בּוֹ נִגַע צִרְעָת אִשְׂרָאֵל לְאִתְשִׁיג יָדוֹ בְּטָהָרָתוֹ:

“This is the Law for who has it, the *tzoras* disease, and who cannot reach *lechatchila*, in purification.” (Vayikra 14:32).

Most read this passuk as one who has limited means and cannot give the prescribed korbanos. However, this passuk seems to be wrapping up the Laws of *tzoras* so how can this only be the Law of he who has limited means? Additionally, even if he had limited means, the Torah still gives him or her a way to atone with lesser offerings. Is the purity reached the same?

The prescription, *lechatchila*, for becoming pure is: on the day the person is deemed clean from *tzoras* the metzora brings two birds, a cedar stick, a strip of red wool, and hyssop. (Vayikra 14:4). On the eight-day of cleanliness, the metzora takes two male lambs, one ewe lamb, along with flour and olive oil. (Ibid 14:10). If the person is poorer, then on the eight day the metzora takes one male lamb, flour and oil. (Ibid 14:21). Then instead of another lamb and ewe he takes two doves. (Ibid 14:22).

Gemara in Arachin 17b says, *really, this is the Law for all metzoras. The passuk is teaching us that it is the person with limited means because atonement and purification takes effect so long as a person brings the korban of his or her means.*

Gemara in Krisos 9b says, *a person who suffers from multiple tzoras and is healed in one time brings one set of korbanos. This is because it says “This is the Law of he who is afflicted with tzoras disease.” (Vayikra 14:32).*

These Gemaras seem clear that even though it mentions one with limited means, it refers to the entire section of cleansing the metzora.

Ohr Chaim explains, *זאת תורת אשר בו נגע צרעת*, “*This is the law concerning someone afflicted with tzoras.*” *The entire verse seems superfluous. Chazal already taught in Torahs Kohanim that the extraneous words זאת תורת refer to the situation when a poor person insisted on bringing the chatos appropriate for a rich person. His offering is acceptable. You may well ask why the Torah had to tell us this. Why should it not be simple logic seeing the Torah's verses dealing with the poor man were designed only to lighten his burden. If such a person is willing to extend himself beyond what he is obligated to do more power to him! He will surely be blessed! It appears that*

seeing that the Torah used the word תָּאֵר to exclude a wealthy man who brought the offering appropriate for a poor man, the Torah was afraid that the reader might feel that a poor man would also not be allowed to deviate from the rules laid down previously. The word תּוֹרַת therefore teaches that the poor is free to do better than the Torah demanded of him.

Aderes Eliyahu says, *this teaches us that a poor person can bring the prescribed korbanos and a rich person can rely on the poor man's substitute and still be tahor. Also, the word "Law" teaches us that if one is bringing the korban for someone associated to him who cannot afford their own, i.e. a minor son or daughter, a slave or maidservant, then the korban is brought according to the poor person's substitution.*

Malbim makes the distinction between this Law of the metzora and that law of the woman giving birth. (Vayikra 12:7). That Law is prescribed. The woman must give as prescribed. Only if she cannot afford can she substitute b'dieved. However, here, the Law is for anyone to give either offering. There is a lichatchila and a b'dieved. The difference is twofold. First, by the birthmother, the "this is the Law" comes prior to giving the b'dieved korbanos. Second, there it says which korban is for what (lamb for oleh, squab for chatos). Here, by metzora, both means of korbanos are stated prior to our passuk, and it just says one for one and the other for the other. They can be interchanged with birds.

We read our passuk carefully as "This is the Law for who is afflicted with it—the tzoras disease—who cannot reach purification." (Ibid 14:32). Note there is no vav adding to the clause. They are one statement, not two separate segments. *This is the Law of the metzora who has no other way to gain purification and atonement, except as per this Law.* The metzora is to bring the prescribed korbanos. Without these prescribed korbanos the person cannot reach purification. The Torah is teaching that tzoras is something very different than other diseases. While the Torah does not outright tell why tzoras afflicts a person, it does tell us that the person needs purification and atonement. Other illnesses and disease do not require purification. They may make the person think about disease and illness and then turn the person introspective to find out what sins he or she is doing to get sick.

Sometimes illness is merely a struggle or a test. In Torah ethics, the belief is that a person gets only what HaShem wants the person to get. However, it is not always a punishment or a necessary to be an atonement for something. The reason is usually unknown. Infants get sick, good people struggle. It is about tests, and struggles, and the ultimate plan Hashem has for a person.

They can get introspective and do teshuva but when they are well, they can move on with their lives. They can give a thanksgiving offering (or kiddush) or not. Each to their own.

With a metzora, it's different. The person may otherwise feel well. It is the kohen that has to consider the person impure. Then it is through korbanos that make the person pure again. Not only that, it is not an incidental *tummeh* like seeing a certain discharge; it is a *tummeh* that requires time of quiet contemplation away from others. It also requires korbanos and anointing with blood and oil for purification and forgiveness. Yes, a person can bring the cheaper korban. However, the passuk is clear, *you cannot reach purification on your own*. HaShem has to grant it. After a week's contemplation—and possibly a week's worth of lost wages—the person will know which korban to bring. We do not judge the person. If the person wants to get away cheap, then that person missed the entire point of the seclusion period of a metzora. No one can help that person at that point. Conversely, proper contemplation and korbanos can help the person *reach* purification.