



Tazria-Metzora

How Tragedy Turns Into A Reward

This Shabbat, on the eve of Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, we will be reading the parshiyot of Tazria and Metzora. These two parshiyot have a very strong common theme.

In the parsha of Metzora, we are introduced to the fascinating subject of *צִרְעַת הַבַּיִת* - leprosy of houses. The Torah tells us that whilst we were living in the Holy Land, if one discovered discolouration on the walls of their house, and it was determined that this was indeed *צִרְעַת*, they would need to do the following:

First, they would remove their possessions and place them outside. If that didn't help, then one would remove the plaster. Eventually they might even have to knock down the house and rebuild it.

So why did such an awful scenario take place? The Midrash, and the Gemara Masechet Arakhin, suggest that this came as a punishment for people who didn't engage in the mitzvah of *הַכְנִסַת אֹרְחֵי*, of hospitality. People who may have claimed to be poor, and without anything to share, were then forced to show the world their numerous possessions.

But there is a fascinating midrash which says that the leprosy of houses actually came as a reward. Indeed, the Mishnah Masechet Bava Metzia substantiates this by telling us that the Canaanites knew that they would be losing their houses, and so, with the intention of one day returning to their homes, they hid their valuable possessions inside the walls.

So Hashem sent leprosy of houses specifically to those homes which had those gems within their walls. And in this way, the tragedy of dismantling

the walls of a home turned into a remarkable reward.

We'll see this happen next week, when, yet again, we will be marking Yom Hazikaron, remembering valiant soldiers and victims of terror.

The trauma and sadness of Yom Hazikaron runs so deep, but then the very next day will be Yom Ha'atzmaut, a day of deep celebration for the Jewish people. And when you come to think of it, we wouldn't be able to have a Yom Ha'atzmaut without the heroes of Yom Hazikaron. What they did, what they stood for, their courage and their bravery. It paved the way for the establishment of the State of Israel, and for the fact that, Baruch Hashem, Israel continues to be viable, vital and strong to this very day.

In our prayers, we often ask Hashem to bless us with *יְשׁוּעָה וְנִחְמָה*, salvation and consolation. Throughout our history, the two come together.

It's as if we cannot enjoy outright redemption and salvation without there being a need for consolation, for sadness, which guaranteed the happiness to take place.

So we pray to Hashem to give us salvation, to bring us to the great days of redemption, without there being a need for suffering. We pray for a wonderful future within Medinat Yisrael, and a world free from oppression and antisemitism.

In anticipation of Yom Hazikaron, may Hashem bring all of Am Yisrael great comfort.

And as we celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, I wish you all Chag Sameach.