

Malaria in the Torah?? Ha-azinu 32:24

Malaria: we will not discuss the medical aspects of this disease in this message.

Just realize that when you go to a "malaria area " these days that any strange severe disease you get there may be malaria until proven otherwise, even if it looks like having just a bladder infection.

Malaria can cause death within 24 hours!

I want to jump with you to Ha-azinu **32:24** and show you 2 very special pesukim

What I want to show you -before this Shabbat-is a very special hint from this week's parashah Ha azinu , which contains a very difficult, sometimes obscure hard to understand language,] which may hint to **malaria**.

I will copy the sources on what I base this

[They will be] bloated by famine, consumed by fever, cut down by bitter plague. I will send against them fanged beasts, with venomous creatures who crawl in the dust.

Mezey ra'av ulechumey reshef veketev **meriri** veshen-behemot ashalach-bam im-chamat zochaley afar.

Commentary by Rav Kaplan zt"l

bitter plague[meriri]

(Saadia), or 'bad air,' possibly 'malaria' (Ibn Ezra; Ralbag). **Meriri in Hebrew**. Or, 'unquenchable destruction' (Septuagint); 'robbers' (Rashbam); 'evil spirits,' or, 'bad vapors' (Targum); 'demons' (Sifri; Rashi); or, 'madness' (Tzafenath Paaneach; cf. Sifri on [Deuteronomy 21:18](#)).

What I find fascinating is the fact that malaria in the past really was thought to be brought about by "bad air" of swamps [still standing waters] and that **Onkelos translates Meriri as ruchin bishin** which -if one takes this literally - means "bad air", in fact hinting to malaria [see above Ibn Ezra and Ralbag]

The word Meriri is not "far away" from MalariaM ..r...r M ...l...r
[interchange in many languages between R and L]

Rashi brings an amazing insight connected with recent "sad medicine".
with cause one to shiver ifread further.

Deuteronomium 32:24

כד מְזִירָעֵב וּלְחַמֵּירָשׁוֹ {ר} וְקָטַב מְרִירִי {ס} וְשֹׁנֵבָה מִתְאַשְׁלַחָבָם {ר} עִם־חֶמֶת זַחְלִי
24 {ס} עָפָר The wasting of hunger, and the devouring of the fiery
bolt, and bitter destruction; and the teeth of beasts will I send upon
them, with the venom of crawling things of the dust.

Other translation:

24. They will sprout hair from famine, attacked by demons, excised by
Meriri. I will incite the teeth of livestock upon them, with the venom
of creatures that slither in the dust.

Rashi:

24. They will sprout hair from famine. Heb. מְזִירָעֵב. Onkelos renders
this as: "swollen from famine," but I have no evidence from Scripture
for this [translation]. In the name of Rabbi Moses Hadarshan of
Toulouse, however, I heard that the expression מְזִירָעֵב is equivalent
to שְׁעִירָעֵב, "hairy from famine," for an emaciated person grows hair
on his skin. מְזִי is Aramaic for hair, as the term מְזִיא [in the
clause]: בְּמִזְאֵדָהּ דְּמַהֵּפּ , meaning "turning over his hair." - [Meg.
18a] attacked by demons. Heb. וּלְחַמֵּירָשׁוֹ Demons fought (לחם)
against them, as Scripture states: "and flying creatures (בְּנִירָשׁוֹ) fly
upwards" (Job 5:7). These are demons. excised by Meriri. Heb. וְקָטַב
מְרִירִי, and excision caused by a demon named מְרִירִי.

A long time ago I bought [in Hadassah hospital: "The Biology of Human
Starvation" [Minnesota University

I hardly had time to look in the book, but by "chance" I opened one
day a certain page and I was astonished to see the following written:

Quote from the book:[page 240]

A different type of change in the hair during starvation was reported

by Curran [1880]

.....relating a remarkable "false growth caused by decay and hunger" of body hair on the face and arms of starving children.

Curran had never seen anything like this but was informed by Reverend Canon Bourke that he had seen hundreds of such cases in Ireland.

Among the Warsaw famine victims, there was a pronounced development of downy hair all over the body.

etc etc

Seeing this written "with a heavy heart] I was indeed astonished to see Rashi's commentary on the verse in Parashat Haazinu [Deuteronomium 32:24]

Not a nice subject to write about, but I wrote it because of the Torah verse and the amazing insight of Rashi, which he brought in the name of Rabbi Moses Hadarshan.

May all this be history forever, but never to be forgotten.