

METZORA



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
RCA Israel Region



1st aliya (Vayikra 14:1-12)

Purification from Tzarat:

When the Kohen determines that the Tzarat of the skin has subsided, the Metzora undertakes a process to allow him to reenter the camp, though for 7 additional days he may not enter the Mikdash. Outside of the camp, 2 birds are taken, one slaughtered, the other dipped into its blood and water, along with cedar wood, a red thread and hyssop. The blood and water is sprinkled on the Metzora. The live bird is sent away. The Metzora immerses. **The 8th Day:** On the 8th day, his hair is shaved, he immerses and brings offerings.

The purification process of the Metzora has 2 stages. The first stage is done out of the camp, or city. After 7 days, a second process is done on the 8th day. This will be described in the next aliya.

May the learning from this issue of TT
לעילוי נשמת

**הרב עזריאל ב"ר יוסף טוביה
ובלומא פיגא ז"ל**

Rabbi Israel Miller z'l

on his 20th yahrzeit, ח' ניסן

The Miller, Kalish and Kram Families

The Metzora purification process is unique. It has 3 unusual elements. 1) 2 birds are taken, outside of the city, with one slaughtered, one sent away free. 2) Hyssop, a thread and wood, along with the bird are used to sprinkle upon the Metzora to purify him. 3) On the 8th day, blood and oil are placed on the ear, thumb and big toe of the Metzora.

Each of these unusual elements is found elsewhere. Yom Kippur. Para Aduma, the red heifer. And the inauguration of the Kohanim.

The 2 birds, one offered and one sent free – well, that is Yom Kippur. 2 goats. One offered and one sent to the wilderness. The goats are instruments of atonement, kapara.

Hyssop used to sprinkle upon a person – well, that is the Para Aduma, the purification of a person after contact with the dead. The sprinkling is the instrument of purification, tahara.

The placing of oil on the ear, thumb and toe was the instrument of inauguration of the Kohanim, achieving holiness, kedusha.

The purification of the Metzora is the kapara of Yom Kippur, the tahara of Para Aduma and the kedusha of the inauguration of the Kohanim. Kapara, Tahara and Kedusha; atonement, purification, holiness.

The Metzora is the most dramatic tuma. He is sent out of the camp entirely. His re-entry to the camp and then to the Mikdash is also the most dramatic: Yom Kippur elements of kapara, atonement, Para Aduma elements of tahara, purity and inauguration elements of kedusha, of holiness.

We have a notion of tuma that we have

been developing. The Mikdash is the encounter of man with the Shechina. The Divine invites us to this encounter. We are invited due to G-d's view of man as regal, noble, dignified. Worthy of invitation.

Tuma is the encounter of man with life situations that bruise our sense of nobility and dignity. Encounters with our mortality, our gross material corporeality, the part of our life we share with all the animal world. This includes death, illness, procreation, food. Our nobility resides in our human uniqueness, our communication, our social nature.

The dignity and nobility of the Metzora is bruised by the public nature of the lesions or discoloration on his skin. His regal nature is further damaged by the need for isolation, the loss of social interaction. A double hit to his dignity: the shame of his visible skin blemishes and his need to socially isolate.

In order to regain his lofty dignity, he needs kapara and tahara, 2 processes of renewal, of Divine cleansing. Kapara and Tahara are Divine signals to us of Divine favor. The Divine love for man expresses itself in His willingness to reach for us, to forgive, to wipe clean the past. Kapara and

Our broken hearts are with
Dr. Irwin and family
on the passing of a
true Eishet Chayil and dear friend
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for you and Am Yisrael.

May H' wipe the tears upon every face

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Tahara are G-d's affirmation of man.



2nd aliya (14:13-20) The offering is brought: its blood is placed on the right ear, thumb and big toe

of the Metzora. Oil is sprinkled in front of the curtain and placed on the right ear, thumb, big toe and head of the Metzora. With these the Kohen has provided kapara for the Metzora and he becomes tahor.

The unusual placing of blood and oil on the ear, thumb and toe are elements borrowed from the inauguration of the Kohanim, the entry into Kedusha. The Metzora is being equated to or at least associated with the holiness of the Kohanim. In so doing he is affirming that we all are endowed with holiness, that our purpose is an elevated one. The Metzora emerges from his elaborate process of tahara having affirmed anew the dignified, lofty station of man, beloved of his Creator, endowed with kedusha. In this newly affirmed state he may rendezvous anew in the Mikdash, as the dignified being beckoned by the Shechina.



3rd aliya (14:21-32) **The less expensive alternative:** If one is unable to afford the above

offerings that are brought on the 8th day for the Metzora, a less expensive alternative is offered, including birds in place of one of the animal offerings. The entire process outlined above is then done to provide kapara and tahara for the Metzora.



4th aliya (14:33-53) In the land of Israel, **homes** will be subject to Tzarat as well. The Kohen will

examine the marks. If declared Tzarat, all that is in the home becomes tamei, hence all shall be removed before the Kohen's

declaration. If the marks spread over the next 7 days, the Kohen shall order stones removed and replaced. If the spread persists, the Kohen may order the home demolished. If the Kohen declares the home tahor, 2 birds are taken, one slaughtered, the other dipped in its blood with cedar wood, a crimson thread and hyssop. The bird is set free.

A person may become tamei by being in a home with Tzarat. We have been arguing that entry into the Mikdash requires a person to recognize their noble station in life. But life can damage our nobility, causing us to underestimate our nobility. But life may also be served to us on a golden platter, inflating our self-perception. Noble we are. But not by virtue of what we have. Rather by virtue of what we are. Our houses may be the source not of diminished dignity but of hubris. Oh we moderns know all too well how the fantastic wealth of our times can distort healthy self-perception. Man's dignity lies not in the grandness of his home, but in the grandeur of his person. A pock on your house if your home has inflated human dignity to become hubris.



5th aliya (14:54-15:15) A Zav, a male, has a discharge from his organ of procreation that is unusual. He renders others tamei and requires a purification process of 2 bird offerings at the end of 7 days.



6th aliya (15:16-28) A regular sexual discharge of a man renders a low level of tuma. **Nida:** A woman's regular menstrual bleeding renders her temeya for 7 days, transferring her tuma to others including through touch. **Zava:** A woman who has bleeding

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inconsistent with her regular period is a Zava, a similar Tuma to the male Zav. She counts 7 days before becoming tahor.

Procreation may also lead to an inflated self-image; creation is not just His, but is ours. He gives life. We give life. Healthy self-image of our dignity and majesty can be damaged by our physicality in both directions; deflated and inflated. Too low a view, that we are nothing more than animals. Or too high, as creators, leaving less room for *the* Creator. Perhaps these laws, relating to abnormalities in organs of procreation relate to the possibility or perhaps tendency of human beings to ascribe inflated views of themselves as creators, in place of the Creator.



7th aliya (15:29-33) Offerings are brought following the cessation of this unusual bleeding.

The laws of tuma and tahara are not a part of our world. The laws are complex. Life in the times of the Mikdash, the world of tuma and tahara would be unrecognizable to us. We would be lost in that world, not knowing what to do. We have vestiges – the washing

of hands before bread. And washing our hands at the seder before karpas. The seder is perhaps the only time we really dip our toe into the world of tuma and tahara, just a tad, to transport ourselves, even for a moment to the world of the Mikdash, the world of tuma and tahara.

HAFTORAH SHABBAT
HAGADOL
MALACHI 3:4-24

The Shabbat before Pesach is referred to as *Shabbat Hagadol*, or The Great Shabbat. Though it is not absolutely certain why *Shabbat HaGadol* was given this name, some suggest that it is based on a *pasuk* at the end of the haftorah of this Shabbat. A day will come in the future, says that prophet, that will be ‘*gadol*’, or awesome. “Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the Lord.” (3:23)

The message of Malachi is clear: The people have been committing various sins. He warns the people that there will be a day of reckoning. Every act, every word,

A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES
Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

“יגלח את כל שערו את ראשו ואת זקנו ואת גבות עיניו ואת כל שערו יגלח” (יד:ט)

“He shall shave off all his hair, that of his head, his beard, and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off.” (14:9)

The great Medieval Torah Commentary – The Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim M’Luntz (1550-1619, Prague) wondered and asked why the text had to delineate all the exact places the Leper had to shave? It could have simply stated the need to shave all his bodily hair?

The Kli Yakar answers that an important lesson can be learned from the detailed description in the text. The three main transgressions that were punished with leprosy (Tzaraat) are haughtiness, evil gossip and an envious eye. For the leper to become spiritually clean again, he must, therefore, symbolically rectify himself from these three sins. He must shave off all his hair on his head hinting to his haughtiness by always wanting to be “at the head” of everything. Secondly, he must shave off his beard, for failing to “guard” his mouth from speaking false gossip. Finally, his eyebrows must be completely shaven off because it ceased to protect his eyes from envy. Shabbat Shalom

we engage in is judged by God. Now is the time to return.

There is a subtle hint in the haftorah to our celebration of the Seder with the reference to the coming of Eliyahu Hanavi. The haftorah ends with a reference to Eliyahu who will come at the end of days to herald the coming of the Mashiach. An uplifting message tops off the haftorah. In the final *pesukim* the powerful notion is conveyed that just as the people of Israel were redeemed from Egypt after generations of slavery, so too will the people be redeemed with the coming of the Mashiach in the time to come. May that day come soon be"H! ■

STATS

	METZORA
of 54 sedras in Torah	28th
of 10 in Vayikra	5th
Lines	159
Rank (Among The 54)	40th
Parshiyot	7
P'tuchot	4
S'tumot	3
P'sukim	90
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	42/5
Words	1274
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	39/4
Letters	4697
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	39/4

MITZVOT

	METZORA
Mitzvot (pos/prohib)	11+0

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