

Torah Tidbits

א' אייר תשפ"ג 23 סדר APR 22 ISSUE 1512

תזריע - מצורע

PARSHAT TAZRIA - METZORA
SHABBAT ROSH CHODESH

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בשוב ה' את
שיבת ציון
היינו כחלמים

In memory of my parents **Vitzchak & Chana Heller z"l**
Dedicated by their daughter Dvora Gorman

THIS WEEK'S TORAH LEARNING IS DEDICATED IN HONOR OF OUR DEAR MOTHER,
MIRIAM KNECHT עמו"ש, WHO IS CELEBRATING A VERY SPECIAL BIRTHDAY
& IN HONOR OF HER APPRECIATION FOR ארץ ישראל AND שבעים פנים לתורה
WITH MUCH LOVE AND ADMIRATION FOR A MOTHER LIKE NO OTHER!
♥, THE GANTZE MISHPACHA

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT TAZRIA - METZORA
CANDLES 6:36PM • EARLIEST 5:50PM • HAVDALA 7:51PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:30PM

Table of Contents

04	Dear Torah Tidbits Family Rabbi Avi Berman	40	OU Israel Schedule
08	Tazria Metzora – Honest Relationships Rabbi Moshe Hauer	50	The Flower and the Final Room Rabbi Moshe Taragin
10	Aliya By Aliya Sedra Summary Rabbi Reuven Tradburks	54	Israel's Holy Flag Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider
16	Pinkus the Peddler Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb	56	Haftorah Insights Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman
20	The Plague of Evil Speech Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l	58	Tzara'at Rakel Berenbaum
24	Probing The Prophets Rabbi Nachman Winkler	62	Me'ein Sheva at a Rotating Venue Rabbi Daniel Mann
26	The Power of Speech Rabbi Shalom Rosner	66	The Omer Offering and the Chadash Prohibition in Israel #1 Rabbi Moshe Bloom
28	Dramatic Declaration Rebbetzin Shira Smiles	68	The Y-Files Weekly Comic Netanel Epstein
30	Tazria-Metzora: Mazal Tov! Rabbi Judah Mischel	70	OU-JLIC Liana Katz
36	Simchat Shmuel Rabbi Sam Shor	72	Torah 4 Teens By Teens Shimmy Goldsmith // Yehuda Sunshine

HELPFUL REMINDERS

- Yom Hazikaron begins Monday evening April 24
- Yom Ha'azmaut begins Tuesday evening April 25

Kiddush Levana – Iyar

Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad 3 Iyar/ Sun. night April 23

7 Days After Molad 1 Iyar/ Thurs. night April 27

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until 14 Iyar/ Thurs. night May 4, all night



This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photo by: Ari Ellen

We are a family of seven that made aliya in 2008.

We currently live in Nofei Hashemesh, Bet Shemesh

This photo was taken at Ashkelon National Park at sunset on Yom Haatzmaut when my kids climbed on top of a "Nachman" van to dance.

This photo represents the beauty and zechut of living in modern day Eretz Yisrael witnessing the geula as all types of Jews from all backgrounds come together to celebrate.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	EARLY	TZARIA-METZORA	HAVDALA	ACHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM
6:36	5:50	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:51	Candles 6:41 Early 5:53 Havdala 7:57
6:54	5:52	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	7:53	6:58 5:56 7:59
6:55	5:51	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:52	7:00 5:54 7:57
6:52	5:50	Gush Etzion	7:51	6:57 5:54 7:57
6:53	5:52	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	7:53	6:58 5:55 7:59
6:52	5:51	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:52	6:57 5:54 7:58
6:54	5:52	Netanya	7:53	6:59 5:56 7:59
6:53	5:51	Be'er Sheva	7:52	6:57 5:55 7:57
6:53	5:52	Rehovot	7:53	6:58 5:55 7:58
6:36	5:52	Petach Tikva	7:53	6:41 5:55 7:58
6:52	5:51	Ginot Shomron	7:52	6:57 5:54 7:58
6:44	5:52	Haifa / Zichron	7:54	6:49 5:56 8:00
6:51	5:50	Gush Shiloh	7:51	6:56 5:54 7:57
6:54	5:52	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	7:53	6:58 5:56 7:59
6:56	5:50	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:51	7:01 5:54 7:57
6:52	5:50	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:51	6:56 5:54 7:57
6:54	5:52	Ashkelon	7:53	6:59 5:56 7:59
6:53	5:52	Yad Binyamin	7:53	6:58 5:55 7:58
6:47	5:50	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:52	6:52 5:54 7:58
6:51	5:49	Golan	7:51	6:56 5:53 7:57

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:30PM • next week - 8:35pm

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 ays Wed - Shabbat
April 19-29 / 28 Nisan - 8 Iyar**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:11 - 4:59
Sunrise	6:04 - 5:53
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:20 - 9:14
Magen Avraham	8:42 - 8:34
Sof Zman Tefila	10:26 - 10:21
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:37 - 12:35
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:10 - 1:09
Plag Mincha	5:48 - 5:54
Sunset (Including Elevation)	7:10 - 7:17



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



In recent weeks *Am Yisrael* has unfortunately lost four sets of siblings. Yaakov Yisrael and Asher Menahem Paley from Ramot, Hallel and Yagel Yaniv from Har Bracha, and Maia and Rina Dee and their mother Lucy from Efrat were tragically murdered by terrorists who ended their lives way too soon. This past week Maayan and Sahar Asor from Teveria were killed by the floods in Southern Israel.

Losing a loved one is the most painful experience. A parent burying a child goes against nature and breaks our hearts. It is impossible to imagine the pain of a parent who loses two children at the same time. I am sure many of us watched the eulogies in person or online. If you haven't I encourage you to watch them because it is incredibly powerful hearing the mother of the Paley boys, the mother and father of the Yaniv boys, and the father of the Dee girls and Lucy's husband. They are going through the most extreme and toughest moments of their lives, and they are giving *Chizuk* to *Klal Yisrael* – admirable!

I think we are all puzzled and asking ourselves why so many sets of brothers and

sisters are dying. When you look back at the past 75 years since the creation of the State of Israel, aside from wars, we have not seen a time when so many young siblings were killed in such a short time span. This raises the question, what does *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* want from us?

While none of us know why *Hashem* brought these tragedies to these families and to the Jewish people, we can contemplate what lessons we can take from this to improve ourselves. We should think about the message *Hashem* is sending us.

There is a video which circulated of a religious teenage girl going over to two secular older women. The girl told them “we’re family,” and they responded “we are not family.” Unfortunately we have seen too many cases where this is the situation. The protests here in Israel provided ample examples of disunity among *Klal Yisrael*.

We saw videos of throngs of people taking the up escalator in the train station leaving their demonstration and throngs of people taking the down escalator on the way to a counter demonstration. Both groups are very adamant about their opinion which all too often results in yelling at each other and acting with disrespect, which is very painful.



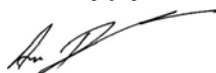
On the flip side, these demonstrations have illustrated how we can act as loving brothers and sisters even when we disagree. Other videos circulated of people leaving their demonstrations handing their flags to people on their way to the counter demonstrations in a respectful and loving manner.

We are now in a very emotional time of the year – between *Yom HaShoah* and *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom HaAtzmaut*. When standing in places like Har Herzl, Yad Vashem, or the train tracks leading to Auschwitz we are reminded that people around the world view all Jews as brothers and sisters. When they hate one of us, they hate all of us.

When I think of these incredibly painful circumstances of biological siblings being killed, I feel it is a reminder from Hashem that all of Klal Yisrael is indeed one family. It is incredibly difficult to hear Jews telling their fellow Jews “I’m not your brother.” Especially at times like this, we need to strengthen ourselves and our *Ahavat Chinam*, and we need to realize the necessity to once again look at each other as brothers and sisters.

Davening for my brothers and sisters who lost their loved ones. May we experience the *Geulah Sheleima* speedily in our days.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat, meaningful *Yom HaZikaron*, and a very joyful *Yom HaAtzmaut*.



Rabbi Avi Berman
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FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



OU Executive Vice President

Tazria Metzora – Honest Relationships

Do we know where we stand in our relationships? Do we feel secure or uncertain in our relationships with others?

Our Parsha teaches us a critical perspective and approach to this issue, one that requires great wisdom and balance – what we now refer to as EQ or emotional intelligence – to properly apply.

“Do not carry hatred for your brother in your heart; rebuke your fellow and do not bear guilt over him.” (Vayikra 19:17) In the three clauses packed into this one verse, the Torah is urging us to appropriately express to others the resentment we may feel. We are urged to rebuke, to explain where we feel we have been wronged, but to do so in a way that will not itself be harmful.

One way to see this mandate is as a release valve, recognizing that a hatred

kept inside will build and foment greater anger. We are therefore advised to “get it out of our system.” An alternative view is that holding the hatred within would misrepresent our true feelings towards the other person. Thus, our sages noted that when the Torah records (Bereishis 37:4) how the brothers of Yosef “hated him and were incapable of speaking to him peacefully,” this was actually a compliment to the brothers as their words to Yosef were honest and consistent with their feelings. As Rashi comments, “From their disgrace we learn their praise; they did not speak one way and feel another.”

One can only wonder, however, whether the value of honesty should always prevail. Those same sages (TB Eruchin 16b) spoke of the near impossibility of delivering rebuke properly without causing harm, without “bearing guilt”. How often are we able to express our feelings of hurt in a way which is appropriately measured? Would it not be better to passively continue the illusion of friendship and allow the resentment to remain in our hearts rather than to actively cause harm by bringing it out into the open?

Evidently not. If we do not know where we stand with each other, where the prevailing politeness leaves us guessing as to who our friends really are, we will suffer a meaningful lack of trust and confidence in all our relationships. The Torah therefore

Condolences to the family of
Carol Selig-Kinderman a”h
on her passing

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

enjoins us to be honest with those around us.

We do, however, do best when we do not need to rebuke because we are able on our own to retire the resentments from our hearts, to put away petty things and to maintain genuine good feelings to others by bringing the same measure of understanding to others as we would want applied to us. But where we cannot and where we continue to bear hatred and resentment in our hearts, we owe it to our relationships to not pretend otherwise. We can avoid each other in a way that makes our unhappiness clear, or we can discuss our unhappiness with the offending party privately, carefully, and candidly. But we cannot live in a world of make-believe, projecting an inauthentic and misleading illusion of friendship and worthiness of trust. ■

Lenny Davidman

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TAZRIA - METZORA



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA
SEDRA SUMMARY



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

The double parsha of Tazria-Metzora is challenging. Their theme is simple: one who is tamei may not enter the Mikdash. One who is tahor, may. We learn who becomes tamei. And how one becomes tahor.

The challenge is in understanding why these certain people become Tamei. And why they are restricted from entering the Mikdash.

I will propose a limited theory of Tuma and why it restricts entry to the Mikdash. It is speculation; the Torah does not tell us the theory of Tuma. We can only speculate.

The Mikdash is the place of the rendezvous of man and G-d. The notion of finite man encountering the Infinite is frightening and humbling. But it is also grand. If He is inviting us to meet Him in His Home – well, He must think of us as worthy to meet. Man is His worthy partner. For Man is created in His Image. Man is majestic. Noble. Elevated. Distinguished. Unique. G-d invites majestic,

noble man to the Mikdash.

However, life sometimes causes us to feel less than majestic, not so noble, ordinary and not elevated, rather pedestrian. And in particular, in those things that we share with animals: food, procreation, illness, death. When confronted with our limitations, the physicality we share with animals, our mortality, we can lose the nobility of our station. We can feel like glorious animals. That may be the meaning of tuma. Tuma is the state of bruised nobility. When man feels unconvinced that he is created in the image of G-d, part of a grand covenant, invited by the Creator to be His partner.

The tuma in our parsha is what is called tuma whose source is our own body: child-birth, tzara'at (loosely translated as leprosy), and emissions from procreative organs. These very earthy parts of our being can damage our sense of majesty, making us feel closer to animals than to angels. The invitation to approach G-d in the Mikdash requires man in the fullness of his majesty. That invitation is suspended for the one whose nobility is bruised, one who doubts his lofty station. That man needs his nobility restored before approaching G-d. The process of becoming Tahor is the process of reclaiming our lofty station. Human majesty is required for the rendezvous with the Divine in His home.

Condolences to the family and friends of
Adina Mishkoff Kischel a"h
on her passing

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

In loving memory of
Ernest Kamins ז"ל
אשר אליעזר בן אברהם לייב ז"ל
on his eighth yearzeit
*From his Wife, Children, Grandchildren
and Great Grandchildren*



1st aliya (Vayikra 12:1-13:23)

Childbirth renders a woman tamei (tmeya). At the end of the

tuma, 40 days for a male, 80 days for female child, she brings an offering of an olah and a chatat. She may then enter the Mikdash. **tzara'at** has different forms and different laws. It can be a white patch on the skin, with white hair, cover the entire body, or appear on a recovered inflammation. The Kohen checks to determine if it is tzara'at or if it is an innocuous skin condition. Some appearances are unclear and require a 7-day interval to determine if tzara'at or innocuous.

Childbirth is joyous; yet, the woman becomes tmeya, restricting her entry to the Mikdash. Along the theme mentioned above, experiences that we share with animals may damage our sense of the nobility of being human. Childbirth, though wonderful, is earthy. To recapture the higher nobility of humanity, the woman brings offerings, as a reboot, a reaffirmation of the higher calling in being human.

Tzara'at has many details. It appears as unusual colorations of the skin. The skin is the visible part of our bodies. One with tzara'at would be self conscious, the tzara'at being somewhat embarrassing. One manner in which mankind is distinguished from

May the Torah learned in this issue
be in loving memory and **לעילוי נשמת**

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animals is in our social nature. Being self conscious of our appearance would injure our social nature. This damage to our sense of nobility also demands a reboot in the form of a ceremony at the conclusion of the tzara'at, outlined in the later aliyot.



2nd aliya (13:24-39) Tzara'at can also be found on skin that suffered a burn or on the head or beard. The Kohen assesses the nature of the discoloration determining whether it requires 7-day quarantine and reassessment to determine if tamei or tahor.

While this aliya continues the topic of the first aliya, as does the 3rd aliya, the breaks in the aliyot are deliberate. The first 3 aliyot all end with a verse declaring the person tahor. If we have an opportunity to be positive, let's land on that, not a verse that declares the person tamei.



3rd aliya (13:40-54) Tzara'at can also appear on the head or beard, with hair loss and skin discoloration. When a person is declared to have tzara'at, he rends his garments, lets his hair grow, covers himself to his lips and dwells outside of the camp. **Garments** displaying specific discoloration are deemed to have garment tzara'at. The Kohen assesses the color and shape, quarantining if necessary. If determined to have tzara'at, the garment is burned.

After the detailed description of when a person has tzara'at and when not, the consequence of tzara'at is described. The person acts as a mourner would act: garment torn, hair grows, covered head (a practice we no longer generally observe as mourners). But more dramatically: he is sequestered out of the populated area.

This isolation is one of the things that prompts the midrashic comment that tzara'at is for lashon hara – the punishment fits the transgression. If you can't treat people respectfully, then spend some time alone. Or, in line with the approach outlined above: proximity to G-d demands that we display the nobility of man. tzara'at, an embarrassing discoloration that makes us feel self conscious, diminishes our sense of self. Isolation allows us to reflect on our self worth. Self worth has nothing to do with how we look to others, whether our skin looks good or whether our dress looks fine. Self worth is intrinsic; we have self worth simply because we are created in the image of G-d.

Clothing too is uniquely human. Clothing is an expression of human dignity. The tumah of a garment restricts the wearer from entry to the Mikdash, as human dignity is diminished by this oddly blemished garment.



4th aliya (13:55-14:20) The regulations of tuma of garments are completed. The **process of being tahor** following tzara'at of the body is outlined. When the Kohen determines that the tzara'at of the skin has subsided, the person with the tzara'at may reenter the camp though for 7 additional days he may not enter the Mikdash. 2 birds are taken, one

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slaughtered, the other dipped into its blood, along with cedar wood, a red thread and hyssop. His hair is shaved. On the 8th day he brings offerings. Blood and oil are placed on his right ear, thumb and toe.

The details of the tzara'at and the purification from it are numerous; too numerous to properly outline here. One detail though is worth mentioning. At the beginning of the return from quarantine of the person with tzara'at, 2 birds are taken; one slaughtered, one not. This is not done in the Mikdash, as the person is out of the entire camp. We have heard of the 2, one slaughtered, one not before. The 2 goats of Yom Kippur; one slaughtered, one sent to the wilderness. And also, at the end of the process, blood and oil, placed on the right ear, thumb and toe. That echoes what was done to the Kohanim in their inauguration – also on their 8th day. While the parallel to the Yom Kippur goats may make one feel contrite; the parallel to the inauguration of the Kohen would engender feelings of pride and a sense that I too am holy and priestly.



5th aliyah (14:21-32) If one is unable to afford the above offerings, a less expensive alternative is offered, including birds in place of one of the animal offerings. A similar process to the one with 2 animals is performed.

As with the earlier aliyot the 4th and 5th

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end with the word tahir.



6th aliya (14:33-15:15) In the land of Israel, **homes** will be subject to tzara'at as well. The

Kohen will examine the marks. If declared tzara'at, 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 tahir, 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 **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.

Continuing our theme that tuma is associated with those parts of our lives that may hinder our sense of dignity, our home can 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 pox on your house if it has inflated human dignity to become hubris.



7th aliya (15:16-33) A regular sexual discharge of a man renders a low level of tuma. A

woman's regular menstrual bleeding renders her temeya for 7 days, transferring her tuma to others including through touch. A woman who has bleeding inconsistent with her regular period is a Zava, a similar Tuma to the male Zav. Offerings are brought following the cessation of this unusual bleeding.

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.

HAFTORAH

YESHAYAHU 66:1-24

This *haftorah*, read whenever Shabbat

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Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

"And if he is poor and does not have sufficient means.." (14:21)

ואם דל הוא ואין ידו משגת (יד:כא)

Why is the Torah stressing that the rich and poor lepers bring different sacrifices?

The Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan 1838-1933) felt an important lesson was being taught to us. There are those who study Torah regularly and pray to G-d three times a day, who think that even if they don't keep all the mitzvot carefully, they are still better off than most. It is specifically these individuals who are learned and aware of what needs to be done, therefore the expectations of their actions are even greater.

A poor man who cannot afford any better offering, has fulfilled his obligation by bringing a meager offering. A wealthy person cannot suffice with a poor man's offering, he must bring better to fulfill his requirement. So too, the educated person, being rich on a spiritual level, is expected to perform better. He must ensure that he keeps all the mitzvot with diligence and not suffice with less. Shabbat Shalom

coincides with Rosh Chodesh, mentions how in the messianic era, every Shabbat and every Rosh Chodesh everyone will come to the Temple to worship Hashem.

In this prophecy, Yeshayahu tells us how Hashem (who is too great to be fully contained in physical space, even in the Temple) pays attention to the humble G-d-fearing person, and rejects a person who does (or even intends) evil.

The prophet continues to foretell the fortune that will come upon Yerushalayim (and the Jewish nation) in the time to come, and how even non-Jews will come to recognize Hashem and assist in restoring the Jewish people to their Land and to the Beit Hamikdash.

רפואה שלמה
אברהם יהושע בן פרל באהדנא

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	TAZ	METZ	T&M
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of 10 in Vayikra	4th	5th	-
Lines	128	159	287
Rank (Among The 54)	48th	40th	-
Parshiyot	9	7	16
P'tuchot	5	4	9
S'tumot	4	3	7
P'sukim	67	90	157
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	48/8	42/5	-
Words	1010	1274	2284
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	48/8	39/4	-
Letters	3667	4697	8364
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	48/8	39/4	-

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BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

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IN THE PARSHA

Pinkus the Peddler

He was a character straight out of the novels of Charles Dickens. Scholars have long found Dickens' attitude toward Jews problematic. The character Fagin in the novel *Oliver Twist* is certainly a negative stereotype. But many are unaware of the character named Riah in Dickens' last completed novel, *Our Mutual Friend*. Riah is portrayed as a proud Jew, honest, wise, compassionate and courageous.

Pinkus always reminded me of Riah. He was a Holocaust survivor with no family, who eked out a livelihood by peddling his wares from door to door in Jewish neighborhoods. Such street peddlers were commonplace several generations ago, and he was among the last of them. He occasionally visited the Brooklyn neighborhood in which I grew up, but I knew him best from the lower East side where I went to *yeshiva*.

I no longer recall his real name, but we called him Pinkus because of a then-popular but now long-forgotten Yiddish song about Pinkus the Peddler.

We would buy our school supplies and other amenities from him, mostly out of sympathy. But those of us who had the patience to listen to his tales were more intrigued by his conversation than by the quality or price of his wares. Like Riah the Dickens character, he was proud, honest, wise, compassionate and courageous.

He discussed neither his Holocaust experiences nor his ultimate rescue. Rather, he plied us with riddles about the Bible and Talmud and was a treasure trove of anecdotes about the people he knew from what he called "my world which is no more."

Much later, I discovered another peddler in our own tradition,

so that I no longer needed to identify just Pinkus with Riah. This peddler of old was one from whom not I, but none other than the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yannai, learned a great deal. And that brings us to the second *parsha* of this week's double Torah portion,

"Who is the person who desires life, loving each day to see good? Then guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

Tazria-Metzora.

This week we will read in comprehensive detail about the *metzora*, the person inflicted with blemishes of the skin often translated as leprosy. In the Bible, and even more so in the Talmud and *Midrash*, these blemishes are seen as Divine punishment for sins of speech: malicious gossip, slander, and defamations of character – so much so that the very word *metzora* is said to be a contraction of the words “*motzi ra*,” “he who spreads evil.”

Hence the anecdote described in the *Midrash Rabbah* associated with this week's Torah portion:

It once happened that a certain peddler was wandering from town to town and crying out, “Who wishes to buy a life-giving potion?” Rabbi Yannai heard this man's shouting and called upon him for an explanation. The peddler took out the book of *Psalms* and showed Rabbi Yannai the verse: “Who is the person who desires life, loving each day to see good? Then guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

Rabbi Yannai exclaimed, “All my life I have been reading this verse and never quite understood what it meant, until this

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peddler came and explained it... Therefore, Moses admonished the Jewish people and said to them these are the statutes of the ‘*metzora*,’ the statutes of the ‘*motzi shem ra*,’ the bearer of malicious gossip.”

From time immemorial, commentators have struggled with the question, “What did the peddler say that Rabbi Yannai did not already know?” Rabbi Yannai, by his own testimony, had read the book of *Psalms* many times. The meaning of the verses quoted seems to be self-evident. What could this peddler have added to Rabbi Yannai’s understanding?

Permit me to share with you one approach to demystifying this passage in the *Midrash*. It is drawn from a work by Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, a very insightful 20th century rabbi who lived and wrote in Israel. He reminds us of a teaching by Maimonides to the effect that there are similarities between physical health and illness and moral health and illness.

Taking that analogy further, Rabbi Zevin reminds us that there are foods for healthy people which those who are ailing can simply not digest. They need to first ingest medicine, healing foods, before they are ready for a proper diet.

Similarly, before one can embark upon the proper moral life, he or she often needs to first be healed from a prior tainted moral status. Thus, before one can live a life of “turning from evil and doing good; seeking peace and pursuing it,” which is a normal healthy moral life, it is often necessary to first wean himself from habitual immoral practices which are typically very resistant to change.

Hence the ingenious insight of the

peddler Rabbi Yannai heard. “Do you want to know the secret of a long life? Of a properly lived life of doing good and pursuing peace? Then first you must guard your tongue from evil. That is the secret potion, the healing medicine which will enable you to go on to the next step, moral health.”

In this analysis, correcting one’s patterns of speech is a therapeutic process, a life-giving potion; not a food, not the bread of life.

Only after this pernicious but pervasive fault is corrected, only after this moral disease is cured, can a person actively engage in the next verse in *Psalms*: “Turn from evil and do good...”

Rabbi Yannai was accustomed to reading these verses differently. He understood the question, “Who desires life?” But he thought that there was one compound answer: guard your tongue, turn from evil, and do good.

The peddler taught something much more profound. The answer to “Who desires life?” is a complex one. It consists of stages, the first of which is a healing process acquired by ingesting the potion of good speech. Then one can move up to the next stage, living a full and healthy moral life.

Pinkus the peddler taught me a lot when I was but a teenager. What I did not realize then was that he was following a long and honored tradition of itinerant peddlers who peddled not just trivial commodities, but words and wares of wisdom. ■



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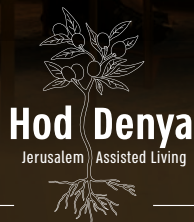
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Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from
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May the learning of these Divrei Torah be לעילוי נשמות
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The Plague of Evil Speech

The Rabbis moralised the condition of *tzara'at* – often translated as leprosy – the subject that dominates both Tazria and Metzora. It was, they said, a punishment rather than a medical condition. Their interpretation was based on the internal evidence of the Mosaic books themselves. Moses' hand became leprous when he expressed doubt about the willingness of the people to believe in his mission (Ex. 4:6-7). Miriam was struck by leprosy when she spoke against Moses (Num. 12:1-15). The *metzora* (leper) was a *motzi shem ra*: a person who spoke slightly about others.

Evil speech, *lashon hara*, was considered by the Sages to be one of the worst sins of all. Here is how Maimonides summarises it:

The Sages said: there are three transgressions for which a person is punished in this world and has no share in the world come

– idolatry, illicit sex, and bloodshed – and evil speech is as bad as all three combined. They also said: whoever speaks with an evil tongue is as if he denied God . . . Evil speech kills three people – the one who says it, the one who accepts it, and the one about whom it is said. (*Hilchot Deot* 7:3)

Is it so? Consider just two of many examples. In the early 13th century, a bitter dispute broke out between devotees and critics of Maimonides. For the former, he was one of the greatest Jewish minds of all time. For the latter, he was a dangerous thinker whose works contained heresy and whose influence led people to abandon the commandments.

There were ferocious exchanges. Each side issued condemnations and excommunications against the other. There were pamphlets and counter-pamphlets, sermons and counter-sermons, and for while French and Spanish Jewry were convulsed by the controversy. Then, in 1232, Maimonides' books were burned by the Dominicans. The shock brought a brief respite; then extremists desecrated Maimonides' tomb in Tiberias. In the early 1240s, following the Disputation of Paris, Christians burned all the copies of the Talmud they could find. It was one of the great tragedies of the Middle Ages.

What was the connection between the internal Jewish struggle and the Christian burning of Jewish books? Did the Dominicans take advantage of Jewish accusations of heresy against Maimonides, to level their own charges? Was it simply that they were able to take advantage of the internal split within Jewry, to proceed with their own persecutions without fear of concerted Jewish reprisals? One way or another, throughout the Middle Ages, many of the worst Christian persecutions of Jews were either incited by converted Jews, or exploited internal weaknesses of the Jewish community.

Moving to the modern age, one of the most brilliant exponents of Orthodoxy was R. Meir Loeb ben Yechiel Michal Malbim (1809-1879), Chief Rabbi of Rumania. An outstanding scholar, whose commentary to Tanach is one of the glories of the nineteenth century, he was at first welcomed by all groups in the Jewish community as a man of learning and religious integrity. Soon, however, the more 'enlightened' Jews discovered to their dismay that he was a vigorous traditionalist, and they began to incite the civil authorities against him. In posters and pamphlets they portrayed him as a benighted relic of the Middle Ages, a man opposed to progress and the spirit of the age.

One Purim, they gifted him with a food parcel which contained pork and crabs, with an accompanying message: 'We, the



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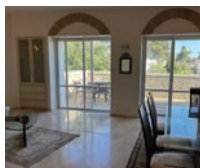
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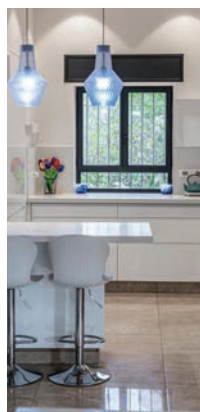
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local progressives, are honoured to present these delicacies and tasty dishes from our table as a gift to our luminary.’ Eventually, in response to the campaign, the government withdrew its official recognition of the Jewish community, and of Malbim as its Chief Rabbi, and banned him from delivering sermons in the Great Synagogue. On Friday, 18 March 1864, policemen surrounded his house early in the morning, arrested him, and imprisoned him. After the Sabbath, he was placed on a ship and taken to the Bulgarian border, where he was released on condition that he never return to Rumania. This is how the Encyclopaedia Judaica describes the campaign:

M. Rosen has published various documents which disclose the false accusations and calumnies Malbim’s Jewish-assimilationist enemies wrote against him to the Rumanian government. They accused him of disloyalty and of impeding social assimilation between Jews and non-Jews by insisting on adherence to the dietary laws, and said, ‘This Rabbi by his conduct and prohibitions wishes to impede our progress.’ As a result of this, the Prime Minister of Rumania issued a proclamation against the ‘ignorant and insolent’ Rabbi... In consequence the minister refused to grant rights to the Jews of Bucharest, on the grounds that the Rabbi of the community was ‘the sworn enemy of progress’.

Similar stories could be told about several other outstanding scholars – among them, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Chajes, Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer, Rabbi Yitzhak Reines, and even the late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik of blessed memory, who was brought to court in Boston in 1941 to face trumped-up

charges by the local Jewish community. Even these shameful episodes were only a continuation of the vicious war waged against the Hassidic movement by their opponents, the *mitnagdim*, which saw many Hassidic leaders (among them the first Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Ladi) imprisoned on false testimony given to the local authorities by other Jews.

For a people of history, we can be bewilderingly obtuse to the lessons of history. Time and again, unable to resolve their own conflicts civilly and graciously, Jews slandered their opponents to the civil authorities, with results that were disastrous to the Jewish community as a whole. Despite the fact that the whole of rabbinic Judaism is a culture of argument; despite the fact that the Talmud explicitly says that the school of Hillel had its views accepted because they were ‘gentle, modest, taught the views of their opponents as well as their own, and taught their opponents’ views before their own’ (Eruvin 13b) – despite this, Jews have continued to excoriate, denounce, even excommunicate those whose views they do not understand, even when the objects of their scorn (Maimonides, Malbim, and the rest) have been among the greatest-ever defenders

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Of what were the accusers guilty? Only evil speech. And what, after all, is evil speech? Mere words. Yet words have consequences. Diminishing their opponents, the self-proclaimed defenders of the faith diminished themselves and their faith. They managed to convey the impression that Judaism is simple-minded, narrow, incapable of handling complexity, helpless in the face of challenge, a religion of anathemas instead of arguments, excommunication instead of reasoned debate. Maimonides and Malbim took their fate philosophically. Yet one weeps to see a great tradition brought so low.

What an astonishing insight it was to see leprosy – that disfiguring disease – as a symbol and symptom of evil speech. For

we truly are disfigured when we use words to condemn, not communicate; to close rather than open minds; when we use language as a weapon and wield it brutally. The message of Metzora remains. Linguistic violence is no less savage than physical violence, and those who afflict others are themselves afflicted. Words wound. Insults injure. Evil speech destroys communities. Language is God's greatest gift to humankind and it must be guarded if it is to heal, not harm. ■

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt"l are part of his 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.

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As this Shabbat marks the first day of Iyar, we read the special haftarah for Rosh Chodesh, the complete chapter 66 of Sefer Yishayahu, the final perek of the Sefer.

Throughout the Hebrew calendar we mark eleven Roshei Chodesh (the month of Tishrei is not included, as it is part of the Rosh HaShanah observance and is not marked separately). As such, one would imagine that we would read this selection three or four times each year. But that does not happen. Many times, a special occasion or significant Maftir reading overrides the Rosh Chodesh haftarah.

When Rosh Chodesh Tevet occurs of Shabbat we choose the reading that connects to the Chag of Chanuka. When Rosh Chodesh Adar falls out on Shabbat, we read the haftarah that ties into the Maftir of Shekalim and the same is true for Rosh Chodesh Nisan and Parashat HaChodesh. Additionally, when Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av occurs on Shabbat, the second of the “shalosh

d’poranuta”, the three haftarot of calamity that precede Tish’a B’av, is read and in most communities (though not according to minhag Yisrael), when Rosh Chodesh Elul falls out on a Shabbat, the haftarah from “sheva d’n’chemta’, the seven haftarot of consolation, overrides the Rosh Chodesh haftarah.

So we are fortunate this Shabbat, as we mark Rosh Chodesh Iyar, that we have the opportunity to read the haftarah set aside for Rosh Chodesh. As the final chapter in the book and the closing perek of the consolation prophecies of Yishayahu, the selection focuses on the final geula and the arrival of Eliyahu as harbinger of the messianic era. In fact, the closing psukim highlight the concept of “chodesh”, month, as implying “chadash”, new, as well, as it speaks of “hashamayim hachadashim v’ha’arets hachadasha’, the new heavens and new earth and then tells of how “midei chodesh b’chodesho”, every month all mankind will come to worship Hashem. The concept that the beginning of new month is a time for renewal flows into the idea of a renewed world that would be formed with the arrival of the Mashiach.

But we would be mistaken if we limited the idea of a “new” world to messianic times alone. The opening of the haftarah does

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Rachel & R'Shmuel Stewart and family
on the birth of a granddaughter

not focus upon y'mot haMashiach nor on words of comfort or encouragement. The first thoughts of this final chapter looks to summarize the major theme that the navi had emphasized throughout his prophecies of comfort and consolation. In fact, one can look back to the very first chapter of the book and see how consistent the prophet's message had been. There, Yishayahu bemoans the meaningless offerings, asking (in G-d's name): "Why do I need your numerous sacrifices?" and explains that the sacrifices are useless as long as the people continue in their hypocrisy to oppress the poor and the weak. In this final perek, Yishayahu says: "He who brings a ketoret is bringing a gift of wickedness", because those very same people ignore Hashem's words. It is only after the condemnation of this type of behavior that the navi proceeds to describe the return of Israel to her land and the recognition of G-d by the entire world.


The simple truth is that before Hashem will bring us the geula and, together with that, a renewal of heaven and earth, we too must bring a renewal-we must renew our relationship with Hashem, we must reassess our "offerings" of tefillot and mitzvah observance. We must review our relationship with others and our observance of all mitzvot Bein Adam Lachaveiro. Especially during this most challenging time for all we can-and must- build a new world.

In doing so, in creating our own renewal, we can reverse the cry of Hashem in the first perek, "Chodesh v'Shabbat...lo uchal aven va'atzara," that Hashem can no longer abide our Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh, by making this Shabbat of Rosh Chodesh our time of renewal. ■




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The Power of Speech

The juxtaposition of Parshat Shemini and Tazria is somewhat obvious. In Shemini we are instructed of certain laws of *kashrut* - to be careful with the types of foods we place into our mouths. In Parshat Tazria, we are instructed of the laws of *tzaraat*. The gemara (Arachin 16a) declares that the cause of *tzaraat* is the transgression of *lashon hara*. In other words, just as we are to be careful with what we place into our mouths, we ought to be equally concerned with what comes out of our mouths! To avoid speaking *lashon hara* about other individuals.

The Gaon stated that one's mouth is like "the holy of holies" and we need to be careful with our speech. What distinguishes man from all other creatures is his ability to

speak. The *Kuzari* (*Sefer Kuzari*, first essay, 31–43) explains that there are four levels of being in this world: *domem* (inanimate), *tzome'ah* (plants), *hai* (animals), and *medaber* (people, humans). Humans are at the top of this pyramid, and what differentiates man from other beings is speech. Therefore, we need to take great care in how we utilize this powerful God given gift of speech.

The cause of *lashon hara* is not the mouth. It begins with one's eyes and heart. The eyes see faults and shortcomings in other people. This leads the heart to have bad feelings which are later expressed by the mouth. To avoid engaging in *lashon hara*, one needs to first work on the attitude they have towards others. To try to give others the benefit of the doubt and to look for the positive in others rather than focus on the negative.

Rabbi Pam stresses that guarding one's tongue is not limited to avoiding *lashon hara*. An often overlooked part of proper



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speech is the avoidance of אונאת דברים - verbal abuse (Vayikra 25:17). This would include making someone the subject of an embarrassing joke. In today's society, especially on social media, people feel as if they have *carte blanche* to make any statement they desire, irrespective of how offensive it may be to another. If one is insulted or embarrassed by a statement, he is accused of being super sensitive and not able to "take a joke". This is not halachically acceptable behavior. One is to avoid making offensive statements which could cause pain or harm to another, irrespective of the venue in which such statement is uttered.

This applies among friends and family members as well. If a spouse goes out of their way to purchase a surprise gift – if it is not what was desired, one should be careful in their response to such a gift so as not to insult the other, who intended to please them.

We are taught in Mishlei (18:21) "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." A person can say something to another or about another that can make his life miserable and unbearable that he wished for that moment he was dead.

May we take care with what we say and use our words to encourage rather than to discourage. To compliment rather than insult. To use our speech properly as a "*medaber*" so that we earn our status as productive and respectable creatures at the top of the pyramid. ■

Condolences to the family and friends of
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Dramatic Declaration

The *parshiyot* of *Tazria* and *Metzora* deal at length with the laws of *tzara'at* and the purification process one must undergo to heal from this ailment. “*Adam ki yihiyeh be’or besaro se’et o’ sapachat o’ baheret, ve’haya be’or besaro le’nega tzara’at ve’huva el haKohen o’ el achad mibanav hakohanim* – If a person has a [white] spot, discoloration or spot on the skin of his body, and it [is suspected] of being a mark of *tzara’at* on his skin, he shall be brought to Aron, or to one of his descendants, who are the priests...” (*Vayikra* 13;2) What is most fascinating is that although the malady manifests in a physical manner, it is only a Kohen who can determine the status of one who is afflicted with *tzara’at*, to declare him pure or impure. Why must a person go to a Kohen and not to a doctor?

Rav Refael Sorotzkin in *Habina VeHabrachah* explains that this disease is really a spiritual one, hence one must seek

spiritual insight to find healing. Unlike physical suffering, wherein the sufferer is aware of his illness and searches for remedies and cures, a spiritual illness is often not apparent and therefore one will make no effort to rectify his deeds. Thus, *tzara’at* is a gift. It enables a person to get the spiritual guidance they need to improve their character and grow. Hence, the Torah tells us, “*v’huva* – he shall be brought.” At times, one must **be brought** to the Kohen, even against his will, so he can be guided how to do *teshuvah*. This is also important for the community where he lives since each person’s behavior affects the *klal*.

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitz quotes the Targum’s translation of a *metzora* as one who is “closed off.” *Tzara’at* can come from arrogance, an inflated sense of ego, one who thinks he is invincible. Such a person will not ask advice from others and is convinced he knows everything. His healing must involve a display of humility by going to the spiritual leaders of the community, the Kohanim, to learn from their example and teachings.

The process of purification from *tzara’at* begins specifically when the Kohen declares



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and family on the celebration of her

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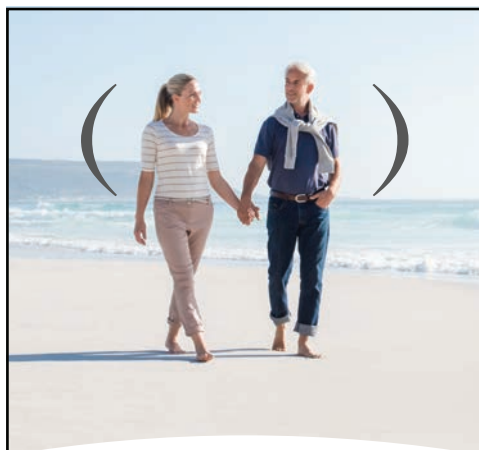
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the impurity, notes Rav Moshe Goldstein in *Sha'arei Chayim*. Any person afflicted with *tzara'at* is receiving a direct “wake-up call” from Hashem to improve. The Kohen continues to be involved in the process offering his encouragement and support toward introspection and spiritual development. Rav Moshe Bick in *Chayei Moshe* adds that the Kohen is a model of one who watches his speech and uses it for the service of Hashem. Therefore, he is the ideal person to teach those who have abused this special quality. When the Torah states “*vhuva* -he shall be brought [to the Kohen]”, it is hinting that one should bring himself to the level of the Kohen and allow the Kohen to inspire him towards greatness.

The *sefer Mi'pi Sefarim Vesofrim* quotes the following Chasidic insight. Kohanim were known to be people of chesed and kindness. They looked at people with positivity and inspired them to become better, consequently, they would not need to declare those who came with an affliction to be impure. What a lesson for us! Are we able to see others in a positive light and inspire others to see themselves as such? If we can, we have emulated the Kohanim of old and will bring *nachat ruach* to Hashem. ■



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RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

Executive Director, Camp HASC

Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Tazria-Metzora: Mazal Tov!

The *tzadik* Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz, zy'a, was beloved for his sense of humor, holy laughter, and frank and pithy observations. A brilliant *talmid chacham*, he was one of the primary disciples of the Chozeh of Lublin, and his deep Torah insights are collected in the sefer *Zera Kodesh*.

One night, Rebbe Naftali was traveling *baderech*, on the road, and stopped at a *kretchma*, an inn, to rest. There, a Jewish wedding party was in full swing, with drinking, eating, singing and dancing. Rebbe Naftali noticed, however, that the bride seemed unhappy and downcast. The Ropshitzer was renowned as a master *badchan*, a wedding entertainer, full of spontaneous songs, puns and plays on words, all *remazim* and codes for inspirational Torah wisdom.

Reb Naftali walked right into the party, stepped up onto a chair and began to regale the bride and groom with creative songs and rapid-fire jokes woven with meaningful words and overflowing blessings. His rhymes and *grammen* revealed so much talent, depth and humor that all the guests were spellbound, clapping along and

laughing out loud. The bride, too, became swept up in the exhilarating atmosphere of joy, hilarity and spiritual elevation, and soon she and the entire wedding party and guests were shaking with laughter, and dancing in circles of Divine ecstasy deep into the night. It was as if Mashiach had arrived and there was no sadness in all the world.

At midnight, on the other side of town, Reb Naftali's dear Rebbe, the Chozeh, awoke to sit on the floor, recite the heartrending lamentations of *Tikun Chatzos* and express the pain of Am Yisrael's exile. However, when he began the contemplative recitation, he felt there was interference with the flow, something preventing his supplications from reaching their intended Heavenly destination. Strangely enough, he wasn't able to summon a feeling of mourning or pain at all. Surprised by this, he closed his eyes and ascended to a higher level of inner vision and clairvoyance. In this state he perceived the wedding celebrations, with Reb Naftali wielding his holy *badchanus* and lifting everyone up with Heavenly joy.

The Chozeh perceived that in the Upper Worlds there was also such a brilliant light of simchah and laughter, that his *avodah* of Tikun Chatzos was completely outshone and swallowed up in it. It was as if the *Rib-bono shel Olam* was Himself exuberantly celebrating, and there were no *dinim* at all over which to be disturbed, nor exiles to mourn.

On that night the Chozeh came to a new understanding of the vast power of *simchah*.

Our sedra contains laws of *tumah v'taharah*, ritual impurity and purity, including the process and procedure of identifying *nega'im*, lesions of *tzaraas*, a 'spiritual disease' that could afflict people's bodies, clothing or homes. If a suspicious blotch appeared on the skin or surface of ones' belongings, the *kohen* would examine it to determine if the affliction was *tzaraas*. If so, it rendered the individual *tamei* and liable to quarantine, an 'exile' of sorts.

וביום הראות בו בשר חי יטמא

On the day upon which living, healthy flesh appears in it, he shall become *tameh* (13:14).

Rashi says the Torah specifically uses the term *וביום*, "on the day", to teach us that there is 'a day' when the *kohen* ought to examine potential cases of *tzaraas*, and there is 'a day' when the Kohen should refrain from examining them. We learn from this that *הָיָה נוֹתֵנִי לוֹ כָּל שְׂבַעֲת יְמֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה*, "A *chasan* is exempt from having a *nega* examined throughout his *sheva brachos*, the joyful seven days of his wedding feast — whether on his skin, his garments, or his house."

Rashi further explains that on Yamim Tovim all are exempt from having lesions examined. Even though the *nega* might be one that could be seen as problematic, the Kohen refrains from looking at it. This is to allow us undisturbed and uninterrupted *simchas Yom tov*.

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shlit'a, shares a remarkable insight. While the presence of a potential *nega* seems to be an incontrovertible, objective reality, we see from the above exemptions, that there is a higher reality, in which undeniable facts are subject to the perspective of *Rachmana*, the Merciful One Himself.

Nega'im appeared as the result of an individual speaking inappropriately, in a forbidden or insensitive manner. One who was afflicted with a *tzaraas* had belittled or disparaged someone, causing ill will or pain. Rashi's understanding of the power of *simchah* is taught to us in the parsha of *negaim* for a reason. By first showing us the potential negative effects of *lashon ha-ra*, the Torah is motivating us to repair the destruction we have done, and instructing us to be sensitive to others by seeing their higher reality and considering

their experience, perspective and needs. By clearing away disruptions to the joy of meaningful celebrations — by outshining the potential 'exile' of *tzaraas* with transcendent happiness — the *halacha* focuses our attention on the redemptive *simchah* of *Yiddishkeit*.

כל המשמח חתן וכלה כאילו בנה אחת מחורבות ירושלים.

"Anyone who brings joy to a *chasan* and *kallah*, is, as it were, rebuilding one of the ruins of Yerushalayim." (Berachos 6b)

May we speak to all with sensitivity, goodness and honor and open ourselves to feel the sufferings of exile. And may we yet be like holy *badchanim*, and cause to be heard, in the cities of Yehudah and the streets of Yerushalayim, the sound of happiness and laughter of rejoicing — the exuberant voice of the *Chosson*, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and the exultant voice of the *Kallah*, Klal Yisrael.

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A profound experience. ~ Sara Yoheved Rigler / *Surprisingly redemptive.* ~ Oren Rosenfeld, Emmy® winner / *Intense, but full of humor, too.* ~ Jessica Steinberg, TOI

Direction: Yael Valier | Design: John Krug



Karen Feldman Photos (2022)

Sherri Mandell's book tells the astonishing story of her discovery of meaning after her son's murder. Todd Salovey's play captures her mix of grief, humor, bitachon, and hope.

Beit Mazia, 18 Mesilat Yesharim, J-m.
April 23, 16:00 & 20:00, both shows followed by talk w/the Mandells
April 24, 16:00 & 20:00, both shows followed by talk w/Sherri Mandell

Tickets, trailer, reviews, details:
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For Rent in the German Colony on Emek Refaim street, 2 rooms, one floor up, good shape, parking. 4,600nis/month

In light of the terrible recent events, a donor who has seen this play, and participated in the uplifting discussion with Sherri Mandell afterward, found it deeply inspiring and meaningful and would like to share with others the experience of this important tool for dealing with trauma. She has therefore offered to pay for tickets for any friends of Dee family members who wish to see the play.

The play can benefit anyone of high school age and older.

Places are limited; please do not reserve tickets through the link below if there is a reasonable chance that you will not use them.

Tickets for this offer:

<https://forms.office.com/r/jjQN61WH1>



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

The *Parshiyot* of *Tazria* and *Metzora* focus primarily on the spiritual affliction of *tzara'at*, a mysterious rash or leprous mark which can afflict one's skin, one's clothing or even the walls of one's home. Our *Chazal* suggest that this spiritual affliction is the result of *lashon hara*- inappropriate speech.

Tzara'at, as mentioned above, could appear on the walls of one's home. The *pasuk* states:

When you enter the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I inflict an outbreak upon a house in the land you possess...

Rashi, based on numerous *maamarei Chazal* offers a rather surprising explanation of this verse:

*This was a good sign for them, because the Amorites concealed **treasures of gold** in the walls of their houses during the entire 40 years the Jewish People were in the wilderness in order that they might not possess them when they conquered the Land. However, upon the appearance of this affliction, they would pull down the house and discover these treasures.*

As we prepare to celebrate *Yom HaAtzmaut* and express our joy and *hakarat hatov* for the incredible gift that is

Medinat Yisrael, I'd like to once again share a profound and especially timely teaching from one of the great religious personalities of the pre-state *Yishuv* and early years of *Medinat Yisrael*, the *Ohalei Yaakov* of Tel Aviv, **Rebbe Yaakov Friedman, zt'a, the Admor of Husiatin**.

In yet another stirring teaching from his first *Shabbat Tazria Metzora* in *Eretz Yisrael* in 1938, the Rebbe points to this particular *Rashi*, to offer his thoughts on both the burgeoning *Yishuv* in *Eretz Yisrael*, as well as how one should relate to both the building of a Jewish presence in *Artzeinu HaKedosh*, as well as those pioneers who might not be ritually observant. To paraphrase the Rebbe's powerful words:

"And how should we relate to those among us who seem distant from our faith and tradition, who are engaged in building and working to establish Eretz Yisrael once again as the eternal home of the Jewish People? Indeed it might pain us to see their distance from our mesora, and our preference certainly would be that all those laboring to sustain the Jewish Yishuv here in Eretz Yisrael, did so with a fidelity to our tradition. However, our holy Torah teaches us that the Amorites left great treasures hidden within the walls of the structures they built here in Eretz Yisrael, that ultimately the Jewish People were able to find upon entering those homes. If this was true then, for homes built by the Amorites, then certainly the same must



Mazal Tov to
Shmuel & Tzivia Polsky & family
 on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson



be true for homes being built in Eretz Yisrael by Jewish hands-there will be great treasures which will certainly be revealed!

...Our way of understanding is that we must appreciate the great merit of those who are actively working to build up our holy land, and our way is to partner in this enterprise, first and foremost because it is a great mitzvah to do so! Furthermore, the only way that we might influence others, and return them to an appreciation for the beauty of our tradition, is through love and unity-not through harsh words or arguments, and certainly not through any inappropriate speech, because after all, the Torah tells us that the afflictions affect our homes as a result of lashon hara! "


Yehi Ratzon, as we reflect on 75 years since the establishment of Medinat Yisrael, and as we continue to navigate very challenging and uncertain times, may we take to heart this powerful teaching from the Rebbe of Husiyatin zy'a, and realize that the recipe for bringing an end to an affliction, and to revealing wondrous treasures, is to see beyond our differences, realize the sacred value of unity, and to use the *Koach HaDibur* to share messages of hope and love, and not *chas v'shalom* to utilize speech in a way that is harmful or divisive. ■

148 Droshos, Yahrseit and Teshuva shiurim, speeches at Dinners and Shiurim on Gemarah, Chumash and Yomim Tovim from Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik z"l.

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Register at:

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Weekly L'Ayla Day of Learning for Women

TUES. MAY 2 AND 16, 9:15AM-1:00PM



9:15AM Torah Tapestries Parsha Class with **Mrs. Shira Smiles**

10:15AM Coffee and Refreshments

10:30AM Megillat Rut with **Mrs. Leah Feinberg**

11:20AM A Bite of Tefilla - Sandwiches and Davening Insights with **Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**

12:00PM Hashkafic Insights into Sefirat HaOmer with **Mrs. Sara Malka Reichman**

40NIS for the day

Register at www.ouisrael.org/events/layla-day



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SUNDAY, APRIL 23 4:00 PM

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www.ouisrael.org/events/kidscookies



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OU Israel L'Ayla presents:

THE MOMMY CLUB!

SUN. APRIL 30. 10:00AM-1:00PM

- 10:00** Music and Movement Mommy-and-Me with **Liya Lewis**
11:15 Triple "P" - Parsha, Parenting, and Prayer **Zemira Ozarowski**
12:00 Art Studio with **Adena Yont**

On-site babysitting included
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INSPIRATIONAL TORAH LEARNING AT OU ISRAEL

SUN, APR 23

9:15 AM

Journey Through the Siddur
Rabbi David Walk

10:20 AM

Mishnah with Rambam's
commentary **Rabbi Dr.
Aaron Adler**

11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion in Tanach:
**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld



SPECIAL EVENT

4:00PM

Hebrew on the Go- Pre
Yom HaAtzmaut Cookie
Decorating for Kids

MON, APR 24

9:15 AM

Divrei Hayamim (L'Ayla)
Rebbetzin Pearl Borow
(will teach as part of Rosh
Chodesh Seminar-L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

The Thought of Rav Kook
on Eretz Yisrael: A study of
the sefer Eretz Chefetz
Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider
(Resumes May 1)

11:45 AM

Novel Parsha Nuances
Rabbi Avi Herzog

8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver
Program **Rabbi Elyada
Goldwicht** (The Bais)

SPECIAL EVENT

9:15AM-1:00PM

L'Ayla Rosh Chodesh
Seminar for Women

TUE, APR 25

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Shira Smiles
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

9:30AM

Minchat Chinuch **Rabbi
Yitzchak Breitowitz**

10:30AM

Parshat Hashavua
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin
(Resumes May 2)

12:15 PM

Jewish National Revival
Dr. Deborah Polster

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud **Rabbi Jeff
Bienenfeld**

SPECIAL EVENTS

10:15AM Special
Broadcast Event- Yom
HaZikaron Ceremony for
Fallen Israeli Soldiers
5:00PM Atid (Young Olot
18-30) -Yom HaZikaron
Walking Tour
7:00PM Yom HaAtzmaut
Tefila with **Rabbi Shlomo
Katz** Gan HaPaamon

Schedule Subject to change, please check website for updates
ouisrael.org/events/

WED, APR 26

*Yom HaAtzmaut
Sameach*

NO CLASSES



THURS, APR 27

9:00 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Ari Kahn

10:15 am

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Baruch Taub
(resumes Apr 27)

11:30 AM

Unlocking the Messages
of Chazal **Rabbi Shai
Finkelstein**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Mesechta –
Bava Basra
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

*L'AYLA CLASSES
ARE FOR WOMEN ONLY



VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

(Zoom Only Classes):
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Password: ouisrael

Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

Rebbetzin Shatz

(L'Ayla)-Insights of
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua
Wed. 8:30PM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902>
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ROSH CHODESH IYAR SEMINAR FOR WOMEN

Monday April 24, 3 Iyar, 9:15AM – 1:00PM

In loving memory of Mrs. Linda Pruwer-Brachfeld a"h

מרת חיה שאשא בת ר' יוסף הלל

9:15AM Introduction: Am Yisrael, Eretz
Yisrael, Torat Yisrael **Zemira Ozarowski**

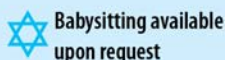
11:05AM Brunch

9:25AM Am Yisrael: Through Tanach and
Beyond **Rebbetzin Pearl Borow**

11:20AM Torat Yisrael: The Primacy of
Torat Eretz Yisrael over Torat Chutz laAretz
Rabbi Moshe Lichtman

10:15AM Eretz Yisrael: להיות עם חופשי
בארצנו
Rabbanit Rachelle Fraenkel

12:10PM Personal Stories of Inspiration
and Connection to the land, the people,
and the Torah



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Peri Garfinkel

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Peri Garfinkel 052-515-2672

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OU Israel NextGen presents:

Women's Night Out!

MONDAY MAY 1, 8:00PM

- ♦ Inspiring Shiur about Sefirat HaOmer with **Rabbanit Shani Taragin**
- ♦ Paint pottery, shmooze, and meet new friends!

Free of Charge!!

Registration required at:

www.ouisrael.org/events/nextgen-jclay

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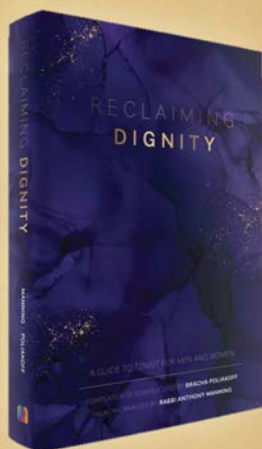
**"Reclaiming Dignity:
A Guide to Tzniut for Men and Women"**

SUNDAY, APRIL 30 AT 8:00 PM

Book Launch & Conversation
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and **Rebbetzen Ilana Cowland**

www.reclaimingdignity.com

Books will be available for purchase 100 NIS (cash or Bit)



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Yom HaZikaron Ceremony for Fallen Israeli Soldiers

TUESDAY APRIL 25, 10:15 AM ISRAEL TIME



OU Israel and Yeshivat Har Etzion invite the global Jewish Community to join with the State of Israel as we commemorate our most solemn day, the Memorial Day for fallen Israeli soldiers and victims of terror.

We will be live-streaming the official ceremony from the historic cemetery in Gush Etzion.

Commentary and English language narration-
Rabbi Moshe Taragin, Yeshivat Har Etzion
and **Rabbi Avi Berman**, Executive Director of OU Israel



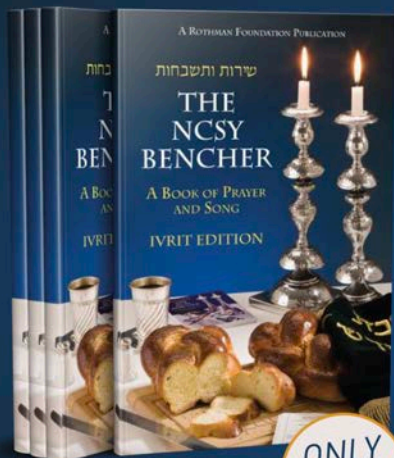
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- ♦ Numerous office and program related tasks

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Join OU Israel ATID for an inspiring:

**YOM HAZIKARON-
YOM HAATZMAUT**



TUES. APR.25, MEETING IN KATAMON, 5:00PM

- ◆ Walking tour with **Rabbi Alan Haber** - Learn about the dramatic battle fought in Katamon two weeks before the State of Israel was declared
- ◆ Falafel Picnic in the Park
- ◆ Join OU Israel's inspirational Yom Haatzmaut Tefilla Chagigat with **Rabbi Shlomo Katz**

For details and (mandatory) registration, visit
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Rabbi Shlomo Katz

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Photo: Joani Pollack



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Sunday, April 23 all shiurim are sponsored by Brenda Bronner in memory of her grandfather Rav Yosef Nehemiah Kornitzer z"l the chief Rabbi of Krakow on his 90th Yahrzeit

Thursdays, April 20 & April 27 - Rabbi Shai Finkelstein's shiur is sponsored in memory of Rav Kodesh ben Chaim z"l

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Rabbi Breitowitz's Tuesday Shiur - Minchat Chinuch is sponsored for the

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and their son Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Auman z"l

הרב שמואל אליהו ז"ל בן הרב רפאל נ"י

Rabbi Goldin's shiur is sponsored for the 2023 academic year by

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Irma Haas a"h and Hilde Myer a"h

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The Flower and the Final Room

Specific details about our redemption are intentionally suppressed. Both Ya'akov Avinu and the navi Daniel were barred from disclosing redemptive roadmaps. Hashem prefers that His geulah process remain oblique and hidden.

Despite the camouflaging of redemption, Chazal provide several metaphors to illuminate the process. As redemption is multi-layered it can only be distilled through a blend of metaphors.

The Yerushalmi in Yoma portrays two Talmudic scholars visiting the Kinneret region during sunrise. Watching the first streaks of sunlight pierce the eastern sky, one of them likened geulah to a sunrise: it will be launched in small increments but will gather momentum and explode upon history. In 1947, upon hearing of the UN partition plan, the Gerer Rebbe quoted this gemara, assuring a skeptical nation that geulah will evolve קימעא קימעא - in small fragments.

An additional midrash likens geulah to a construction process. Famously, Dovid announced מנדול ישועות מלכו, framing redemption as the construction of a

fortress. While stressing the gradual nature of redemption, this image also underscores that final geulah is pivoted upon an edifice in Yerushalayim- the Beit HaMikdash. It remains unclear during which stage of geulah it will be crafted and whether our Mikdash will be fashioned by human hand or miraculously provided by Divine grant. Either way, redemption is a construction process- literally and figuratively.

A third midrash adapts a pasuk in Shir Hashirim and compares redemption to a deer. A deer is stealthy as it appears and, suddenly, disappears from view, slipping behind a thicket. Though it is no longer visible it hasn't absconded, and will soon reappear. During moments of geulah Hashem may seem to disappear, but He is merely "hiding behind a bush" ready to leap out and finalize our redemption.

The Flowering

While each of these vivid Tanach-based metaphors capture the grandeur of redemption, the modern Jewish imagination has developed an additional metaphor. In perek 6, Zechariah refers to Moshiach as a *tzemach* or a *flower* which experiences rapid growth or תחתיו יצמח. Based upon this flower image the term ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו has institutionalized itself as the phrase of modern Jewish redemption. Though many allege that Rav Kook coined this phrase, our first historical record stems from 1956, when this phrase was incorporated into the

prayer for the welfare of the State of Israel authored by Chief Rabbi Herzog.

Despite the ubiquity of this phrase, it has aroused significant questioning and even controversy. This ambitious phrase raises grand Messianic expectations which haven't always materialized. In the aftermath of the Oslo accords and the disengagement from Aza many wondered whether the flower had wilted, rather than having blossomed. After all, if redemption promises sovereignty in Israel, withdrawal from parcels of Land in Israel cannot be considered a blossoming of redemption. Some even suggested altering the wording of this phrase to reflect unfulfilled visions. Other Jews never saw our return to Israel as the first flowering of redemption. They don't view restoration of Jewish sovereignty as a divinely event and don't recite this prayer. In their minds the flower hadn't wilted, it was never planted by Hashem in the first place.

As someone who does affirm this phrase and does recite the prayer, I acknowledge that for many it doesn't fully resonate. Is there a different metaphor which is more universal and more broadly resonant? Is there a fifth metaphor for redemption? Is there a way to describe the process which acknowledges the potential for setbacks and, also, doesn't directly assume a divine hand in our return to our State?

The Rooms of History

Perhaps we should be describing our *era*, instead of speculating about the *process*. Why not refer to our *era* as the *fourth room* of Jewish history? Let me explain.

1st room: Pre-Sinai

There are four chapters to Jewish history.



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The first chapter was a 2400-year pre-Sinai era in which Hashem had yet to directly reveal Himself, His will, and His Torah to a human audience. Sadly, most of humanity was adrift in theological confusion and moral mayhem. Unable to grasp the notion that from One came many, they imagined a world dominated by multiple warring gods, who toyed with their weaker human playthings. Without accountability to One moral God, moral behavior of humans was never expected.

Finally, about 2000 years after creation, one man discovered Hashem from behind the curtain of Nature. He began to educate his world to monotheism, while starting a family fashioned after the will of a compassionate G-d. Eventually, the nation he founded was dispatched to Egyptian slavery, and almost completely abandoned their grandfather's traditions. Thankfully, at the last minute, we were redeemed and were quickly escorted into the second room of Jewish history.

2nd Room: Redemption and Revelation

Liberated from Egypt, we stood beneath Har Sinai and experienced a once-in-history event. No religion has ever dared stake our claim: an entire nation of three million strong stood shoulder-to-shoulder, jointly listening to the direct voice of Hashem in a non-hallucinatory fashion. Har Sinai marked the launch of a 1400-year golden era of Jewish history during which we enjoyed sovereignty and supernaturalism. We lived securely in our Homeland centered upon the Mikdash and Yerushalayim, with unlimited access to prophecy and divine privilege. Though prophecy and ruach hakodesh ebbed during the second

Mikdash, we still encountered the palpable presence of Hashem in Yerushalayim. Sadly, and pathetically, we fell victim to civil strife and tore ourselves apart from within, sinking any hope and wrecking our nation and our Mikdash. Our repeated failure, dating back to the first Mikdash, condemned us to enter the third room of history- the darkest room of them all.

3rd Room: The Dark Room

Scattered among the people of this earth, we spent 2000 years wrestling with history. Stripped of almost every vestige of Jewish identity, we clung tightly to the Word and Will of Hashem and proved to be stronger than history and more faithful than our enemies presumed. We stoutly defended the presence of Hashem in a world darkened by savagery and violence.

Not only did we survive this maze, but we thrived. Not only did we thrive, but we gradually reshaped the ancient world of black magic, paganism and backwardness, into a modern world of monotheism, science and progress. As the vanguard of humanity, we helped it recover from its 1000-year hibernation and helped humanity discover science, morality, and the dignity of the human condition. The culmination of this process saw the world shift into the last chapter of history, as we entered the final room.

4th Room: The Exit Room

In 1948 we turned a door handle and entered the final room of history. The Holocaust marked a terrible and tragic climax to the third chapter of Jewish history. As a horrific conclusion to the third chapter of history, it represented the single greatest chilul Hashem since the destruction of the

Mikdash 1900 years earlier.

We have now entered the final room, through which we walk and through which we will access the terminus of history we refer to as redemption. However, we are walking through a *room*. How long will it take to traverse the room? It is hard to tell. Can there be detours and diversions during our passage through this room? Of course, there can be. Is this a divinely inspired process? I believe that it is, but even for those who don't, undoubtedly history has shifted, and we are all in a completely different place or room than we were a hundred years ago. Walking through that fourth room poses new challenges and demands different responses than those of the previous three rooms.

Redemption, by its very nature, mystifies human imagination. We have no concrete details, only a cluster of redemptive metaphors. No one metaphor fully captures the full vision of this seismic transformation. The more metaphors we conjure, the more visible redemption becomes.

Let us all walk through the final room together. Some of us are holding a flower in our hands, but all of us are walking side-by-side through the same room.

Yom Ha'atzmaut Sameach ■

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RABBI AARON

GOLDSCHIEDER

Editor, Torah Tidbits

Israel's Holy Flag

The heartfelt joy of the Jewish people celebrating Israel's Independence Day!

The unfurling of the Israeli flag throughout the county - on government buildings, businesses, and private homes, even affixed to car windows!

The flag is an honored icon - a treasured symbol of our nation!

However - does the flag of Israel contain any degree of holiness?

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, an illustrious rabbi and leading figure of American Jewry, was asked this very question.

He cited a little known law regarding Jewish burial: "A Jew who is killed is not buried in the customary shrouds, but is buried in his clothing - in the bloodied clothing in which his life was taken."

Why? The reason for this custom is so that God should directly take note, so to speak, of the suffering and pain inflicted on the individual and all who mourn for that individual.

Amazingly, Rabbi Soloveitchik said: the same applies to the Israeli flag.

Beginning with The War of

Independence, soldiers and citizens have lost their lives for the sole purpose of raising the Jewish flag, therefore The flag of the State of Israel has the spark of holiness of a murdered Jew's clothing.

We raise this holy garment - the flag of Israel closer to heaven - as a symbol of utmost sacrifice.

When the flag of Israel flies - it arouses God's compassion!

The Jew utilizes the flag flying high in the sky, waving in the wind a bit closer to heaven, as a form of prayer - "Please bring comfort to those who have suffered!"

Yes...beyond a doubt...the Israeli flag contains a spark of holiness Every single one of them.

The flag raised high for everyone to see unifies the nation serving as an invitation to every Jew to gather around it in

brotherhood and peace.

(To see this teaching come to life on the "big screen"

go to YouTube and type in 'Israel's Holy Flag' - after Shabbat of course - and enjoy!) ■





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HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR.
ADINA SHMIDMAN



HAFTORAH SHABBOS ROSH CHODESH YESHAYA 66:1-24

כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אָמַן וַתִּנְחָמֵנוּ כֵּן אֲנִכִּי אֶנְחָמְכֶם וּבִירוּשָׁלַם
תִּנְחָמוּ:

As a mother comforts her son so I will comfort you; You shall find comfort in Jerusalem.

The above Posuk is recited when one concludes Shiva, as cited by Chazon La'moed 20:2. What is the message of this pasuk, how does it serve to comfort the mourner and what message can we derive from this verse in these challenging times? During difficult times, one looks for support and love. The metaphor is that of a mother figure who provides warmth for her son and carries him through his troubled days. The Malbim suggests an added dimension. He says that we are like a man who mourns

his mother; he thinks she has passed away. In fact, his mother still lives on and returns to him. It is her returned presence which comforts him.

"So, too", says Hashem. "I will comfort you because it is Me that you have mourned." What we mourn will eventually be our ultimate comfort. In the future we will experience and "see" Hashem's very presence in Yerushalayim and this will console us. It is Hashem's presence that we have been distanced from, as we have been apart from Him and His holy city. On Rosh Chodesh, we are offered the window of time to renew our relationship with Hashem in an effort to come closer to Him. It is a distance that is bridged once a month and we hope ultimately permanently, may it be speedily in our days. ■

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Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman is the founding director of the Orthodox Union Women's Initiative and the rebbetzin of the Lower Merion Synagogue in Bala Cynwyd, PA.



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Tziporah a"h, a true Eishes Chayil, always
full of chessed, kindness and laughter, and
brought life and strength to so
many people, that she touched!
She was like Aron, who loved
peace and pursued peace.

Yoni thanks Hashem for having
the opportunity of having Tziporah in
his life, to learn of her caring, patience and
happiness, to overcome her challenges. May
Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world,
in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama
shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with
tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a
crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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PORTION FROM

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Contributor, Torah Tidbits

THE PORTION

Tzara'at

This week's portion talks about *tzara'at*, the leprous curse. The Rambam writes (Tumath Tzara'at 16:10) that *tzara'at* was a physical symptom of a spiritual defect, occurring primarily in individuals on a high spiritual level, whose body functions were subject to their spiritual state. It is seen as resulting from *lashon hara*, slander (Bamidbar, 12:10). First it attacked the person's house. If he repented, then it would not spread further.

With all the difficult things happening now in the country and around the world, I decided to look for inspiration this week from someone who lived through very difficult times. I went to the book "*Drashot mshnot hazaam*" "Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, Sermons from the years of Rage. The sermons of the Piaseczno Rebbe from the Warsaw Ghetto, 1939-1942," by Daniel Reiser. In Rav Shapira's sermon for this portion from the year 1940 he actually talks about *tzara'at* on houses. He quotes the Rashi on verse 14:34 in Vayikra "v'natati nega tzara'at bveit..." "... and I place a lesion of *tzara'at* upon a house". Rashi says that the use of the Hebrew word *natati* signifies something good. Rashi says The [good] news is that the lesion of *tzara'at* will come upon them, because the Amorites had hidden treasures of gold inside the

walls of their houses during the forty years that Israel was in the desert. As a result of the *tzara'at* the person will have to destroy walls (see verses 43-45) and will then find the treasures.

Rav Shapira asks a question. Why did they have to *hisgir* - quarantine the house first for 7 days. Once they saw that they had leprosy on their house didn't they already know that behind it there would be a treasure? So why the need for the seven impure days that they had to wait before the Kohen announces that the house is pure or impure and they can search for the hidden goo?

He starts his answer to this question by saying that "we do not really understand the deep intent of the Torah, but we can try to understand its clues, since we truly believe that everything God does for us even if *chas veshalom*, sometimes He strikes, is for the good – and like we see today in our days that God is not striking us only with physical difficulties, but also with things that distance us from Him spiritually, such as; no cheider for the children to learn in, no Yeshiva, no Beit Midrash for the community to pray together in, no Mikva,... So we wonder, could all these

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things happening to us also be for the good? If it's for good, shouldn't He bring difficulties on us that will bring us closer to Him and not things that bring almost a complete inability to learn Torah?"

He continues that, we see from this portion that the lesion on the house, though meant in the end to bring good to Israel, also made the house impure. First the house was impure for seven days, and only after that were they able to find the treasure. That is why the person whose house it was that found the blemish would say "k'nega nira li" "I have seen something [on my house] that looks **like** a blemish (Vayikra 14:35)". To me it looks like a leprous curse, something that is only bad. He doesn't say "nega nira li" "I saw a blemish" something that is truly bad. This wording is to signify that we don't always understand what God has in mind – what looks bad to us "like a blemish" may bring good as well.

It is unbelievable that he could write those words in the Warsaw ghetto, during the Holocaust knowing that he would probably not survive. It is also amazing that his words were hidden in milk cans and preserved so we can learn them today and gain inspiration.

I would like to dedicate this week's column to the memory of my brother in law Yitchak (Julian) Dresner, a very dedicated doctor in Kiryat Sefer and Nof Ayalon, who never spoke lashon hara. He always had a sefer with him because he loved learning, and would take time to learn with each of his children and grandchildren – even if he had to travel far to do so. One of the things his family has done in his memory is to create a whatsapp group – to receive

weekly laws on *shmirat halashon*. Here's the link if you would like to join <https://chat.whatsapp.com/IYGB7D5MwkkCg5yx-PjtNzY>. Learning these laws can help us in these difficult times.



RECIPE

To purify himself the person with tzara'at had to bring a sacrifice of a bird accompanied by *ezzov*-hyssop. Some identify *ezzov* as middle eastern marjoram. Others identify it as the caper plant or wild thyme or oregano, so here is a recipe for a bird, (chicken) with capers and oregano. When serving this, remember not to speak lashon ha'ra.

CHICKEN WITH CAPERS AND ORGANO

1 Chicken

Salt & pepper, to taste

2-4 tbsps. olive oil

4 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed

4 tbsps oregano

3 tbsps capers, rinsed and drained

1/2 c white wine

Heat olive oil. Add garlic, cook till golden brown. Add chicken and sear for a few minutes. Add oregano and capers, and wine. Lower heat, cover pot and simmer till cooked through. ■

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Me'ein Sheva at a Rotating Venue

Question: The fledgling community of which I am rabbi does not have access for *Kabbalat Shabbat* to the place we *daven* on Shabbat morning, so we have a rotation of houses for it. Should we say *Me'ein Sheva* (the *beracha* with “*Magen avot...*” in its midst) at *Maariv*?

Answer: *Me'ein Sheva* (=MS) is like a shortened *chazarat hashatz*, which *Ma'ariv* during the week does not have. The *gemara* (Shabbat 24b) says to recite it because many *shuls* were in dangerous places; by stretching out the *davening*, latecomers have time to finish before everyone leaves.

Because of MS's unusual nature, it is not surprising that *Rishonim* limit it to circumstances that resemble the original situation. The Ra'avya (see Tur, Orach Chayim 268) says that the danger the *gemara* discussed is no longer prevalent and that we continue doing MS but only when there is a *minyan*. The Rivash (Shut 40) and Beit Yosef (ad loc.) say that it does not apply to makeshift

minyanim, where it is not as likely for people to come from all over to *daven* and for one to come late. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 268:10) rules that a *minyan* formed in a home where *sheva berachot* or a *shiva* period is held do not to recite MS, as these groups are not expected to have people coming and going late.

What is the line between a set *shul* and a makeshift *minyan*? The Taz (268:8) broadens the definition of a *shul*, saying that a group that leaves home and sets aside a place to *daven* for a few days recites MS. The Eliyahu Rabba (268:19), in bringing this Taz, posits that a *sefer Torah* must also be present, as does the Mishna Berura (268:24), but not all agree (see Minchat Yitzchak X:21). The Shulchan Aruch Harav (OC 268:15), in bringing the Taz's expansion, describes it as a place they *daven* for several weeks, which probably means a *minyan* for Shabbat for several weeks (see Minchat Yitzchak *ibid.*). In contrast, the Eshel Avraham (Butchach, to OC 268:8) says that to be set based on temporary use, it must be used every day, three *tefillot* a day.

At first glance, your case lacks consensus in favor of MS, as there is no *sefer Torah* and no place is used on consecutive days (or even weeks). Since MS is a *beracha* of Rabbinic origin, the normal rule is to say *safek berachot l'hakel* (=sblk – when in doubt, refrain from making a *beracha*), and several *poskim* invoke this rule (including

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



Eshel Avraham ibid.; Pri Megadim on Taz ibid.; Mishna Berura 268:25). On the other hand, the Magen Avraham (268:14) says that we do not protest against the practice to recite *MS* even in a *minyan* that is not in a *shul* of any sort. His source is the Maharlbach (Shut 122), who demonstrates that the Orchot Chayim, a *Rishon*, does not limit *MS* to a *shul* at all. The *kabbalistically* oriented cite the Arizal as seeing *MS* as a fundamental part of *tefilla*, which does not require a *shul* (see Kaf Hachayim, OC 268:50). Some also claim that we do not say *sblk* against the Arizal, but not all agree (see opinions in Yabia Omer ibid.) and not all are *kabbalistically* oriented (see K'nei Bosem II:48).

There is a strong factor in favor of your doing *MS*. Many, if not all, posit that the venue's main importance is not intrinsic but a sign of how much the group resembles the original institution of *MS* – of people drawn together from around the community (see sources in Minchat Yitzchak ibid.). The Tehilla L'Dovid (268:13) posits that if the majority of a community leaves its *shul* to *daven*, for whatever reason, in a different place, they recite *MS* because the logic applies. The Minchat Yitzchak concurs. In your case, wherever you do *Kabbalat Shabbat* is your community's central and only *minyan*. This should be enough reason to do *MS* when the *shul* *davens* *Maariv* in a home. Once the place is of less importance per se than the *minyan*, it should not make

a difference that the venue changes from week to week or that there is no *sefer Torah*.

We saw above further support, if needed. Therefore, we posit that you should recite *MS*. ■

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On Wednesday night, a 75-year-old woman had a cardiac arrest in her home in Gan Yavne. Family members heard a loud noise when the woman collapsed in the kitchen and rushed to her aid. They found her unconscious on the ground and immediately called emergency medical services for help.

Or Brizel, a United Hatzalah volunteer EMT, was at his house in Gan Yavne when he received the alert notifying him of the emergency occurring nearby. Or ran to his ambucycle flicked on his lights and sirens and rushed through traffic to traverse the town. Or arrived a few minutes later and was the first emergency responder at the scene.

Or rushed inside and saw the woman laying down on the floor, unconscious without pulse breathing agonal breaths. A moment later an ambulance arrived and Or teamed up with the ambulance team to initiate CPR.

Or and the ambulance team started resuscitation and attached a defibrillator, but the machine did not advise that any shocks be administered. After a few rounds of providing chest compressions, the woman regained her pulse and was stabilized enough to be transported to the emergency room in Assuta Hospital in Ashdod.

After the incident ended Or said: "I have been volunteering as an EMT for a bit more than a year. I started because I love helping my community and I believe in the value of saving lives. I met other EMTs who became my friends and my second family. They helped me recognize just how important this mission is and build my confidence. Helping others is the right thing to do and I am thankful that I have the knowledge and opportunity to do it."



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The Omer Offering and the Chadash Prohibition in Israel #1

Sefirat ha'omer that we are in the middle of counting is an excellent opportunity to learn about a land-dependent mitzvah that we actually don't encounter in Israel often: the *mitzvah* of *chadash*.

Around 15 years ago, when I was a sixth-year student in the Yerucham *hesder* yeshiva, I flew to my cousin's *bar mitzvah* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During the visit, I visited my grandfather in Brooklyn. Their kosher restaurants advertised *kemach yashan*. I remember calling my father, saying: "Dad, I recall that there's a *mitzvah* having to do with new and old grain, somehow connected to the *omer* sacrifice and *sefirat ha'omer*. But isn't it supposed to be a *mitzvah hateluya ba'aretz*? How is it that I've never heard

about it here in Israel, only in America? Isn't supposed to be the other way around?

The *omer* offering and *sefirat haomer*

On 16 Nissan, the *omer* offering was brought at the *Beit Hamikdash* (*Vayirka* 23: 9-14). The Torah writes that from this time, we count 49 days, which is the famous *sefirat ha'omer* that culminates on *erev Shavuot* (*Vayirka* 23:15): וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עמר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימות תהינה

The Torah states explicitly that the time the *omer* offering is offered is the time that permits eating grains (*Vayikra* 23:14): ולכם וקלי וכו' לא תאכלו עד עצם היום הזה עד הביאכם את קרבן אלקיכם חקת עולם לדוריכם בכל משבתיכם.

The five grains that grow prior to mid-Nissan are forbidden for consumption until after 16 Nissan, the day the *omer* offering was brought; only from 17 Nissan can we partake in the new produce. This prohibition is called *chadash* (new). Grains from the previous year are permissible for consumption and are termed *yashan* (old).

All produce that takes root before 16 Nissan is permissible after that date. Since the process of taking root takes three days, grains should be sown by 12 Nissan (*Rambam Ma'achalot Assurot* 10:4). What about outside of Israel? More next week. ■

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Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess named Shlomtzi...



SOME DAY MY HANDSOME DIZZYING PRINCE WILL COME, AND THEN SOMEONE ELSE'LL DO THE DISHES...

She lived in the tallest tower of a castle...

THE CASTLE HAD, OF COURSE, BEEN GUARDED BY A MONSTROUS DRAGON, BUT HE HANDED IN HIS RESIGNATION SHORTLY AFTER PRINCESS SHLOMTZI MOVED IN, AS GUARDING SOMEONE MORE FEROCIOUSLY FIRE-BREATHING THAN HIMSELF MADE HIM FEEL AWFULLY REDUNDANT...



DADDY! YOU SAID I COULD MAKE UP THE BEDTIME STORY THIS TIME, BECAUSE YOUR FAIRYTALES ALWAYS HAVE THINGS IN THEM LIKE "INCOME TAX" AND LOADS OF OTHER STUFF I DON'T UNDERSTAND...



SORRY, SORRY, MY DARLING LITTLE PIRHANA FISH. I'LL TRY FIGHT MY NATURAL IMPULSE TO INTERRUPT.

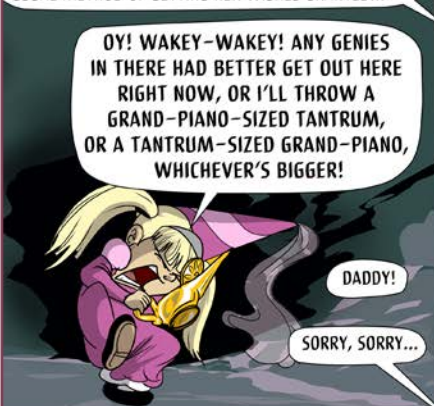
One day, she chanced upon an ancient, mysteriously magical lamp...



OOOOH!

...With curious reverence, she gave it an experimental rub...

...AND WHEN NOTHING HAPPENED, SHE REVERTED TO HER USUAL METHOD OF GETTING HER WISHES GRANTED...



OY! WAKEY-WAKEY! ANY GENIES IN THERE HAD BETTER GET OUT HERE RIGHT NOW, OR I'LL THROW A GRAND-PIANO-SIZED TANTRUM, OR A TANTRUM-SIZED GRAND-PIANO, WHICHEVER'S BIGGER!

DADDY!

SORRY, SORRY...

...And out came a mighty and powerful genie, who...



...TRIED TO LOOK PROFESSIONAL, DESPITE HIS TREMBLING KNEES...

DADDY!

...and promised to grant Princess Shlomtzi three wishes...

AND SO, SHE CACKLED GLEEFULLY, RUBBED HER HANDS, AND PROCLAIMED HER HEART'S DEEPEST DESIRE...



O MIGHTY GENIE, IF ONLY I COULD...

...FALL EACH NIGHT INTO A DEEP, FAIRYTALE SLUMBER IMMEDIATELY AFTER SUPPERTIME, AND NOT BE AWOKEN UNTIL MUMMY OR DADDY GIVE ME A KISS OF TRUE LOVE IN THE MORNING, WHEN IT'S TIME FOR GAN...

HA-HA, DADDY. YOU WISH. NOT ME...



OH, MIGHTY GENIE, BEING AS ROYAL AND MAJESTIC AS I AM, I RESENT HAVING TO SHARE A BEDROOM WITH MY THREE-YEAR-OLD BROTHER, HAREL, WHO DROOLS IN HIS SLEEP AND ZERUBAVEL THE CAT WHO EATS SOCKS...

SO UN-LADYLIKE!

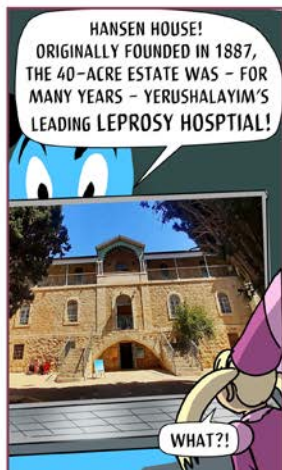
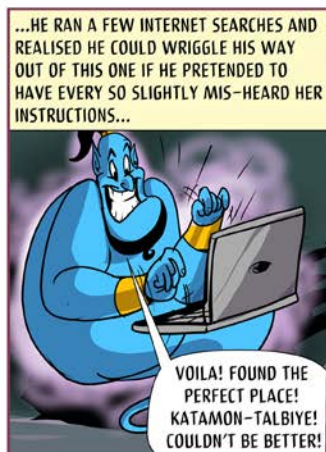
... I WISH TO LIVE LIKE A TRUE FAIRYTALE PRINCESS...

...SO I WANT MY OWN CASTLE THAT'LL BE TRULY ISOLATED, WITH A TALLEST TOWER, A MOAT AND EVERYTHING, WHERE ONLY MY HANDSOME, DIZZYING PRINCE AND I SHALT LIVE...



COMIN' RIIIGHT UP, BOSS! NOTHING EASIER! AS IF I HAVEN'T DONE THIS A BILLION TIMES BEFORE...

BUT ... IT HAS TO BE IN YERUSHALAYIM!





OU-JLIC

Orthodox Union Heshe and Harriet Seif
Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus



Liana Katz
Hometown:
New Rochelle, NY
Community:
JLIC Jerusalem

I am currently a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem studying Biomedical Science.

Growing Together: The Kohen's Role in Community Development

The Midrash calls sefer Vayikra “Torat HaKohanim”, the Law of the Kohanim. It is the Kohen who brings korbanot and is active in the daily functioning of the Mishkan and Beit Hamikdash. This all amounts to a common theme of the Kohen handling activities of purification. In Parashat Tazria, however, we see that the Kohen is responsible for the entire process of tzaraat, starting from the diagnosis and declaration of impurity throughout the purification process. While the Kohen's role in purification is clear, his role in pointing out the impurities in the metzora is peculiar.

The Ramban, in his commentary on Vayikra 13:2, explains that the Kohen's role in diagnosing the metzora is a preventative measure aimed at protecting the community from

harm. Tzaraat is known to be a highly contagious affliction, and the Kohen must diagnose it quickly in order to prevent it from spreading to others.

On the other hand, in Masechet Arkhin (15b), it states that the Kohen who diagnoses tzaraat is actually performing a *mitzvah*, as it says in Vayikra 14:2, “This shall be the law (תורה) of the metzora on the day of his purification”. The Talmud explains that the word “torah” in this passuk can also mean “teaching” or “instruction,” and thus the Kohen's role in diagnosing tzaraat is really providing instruction to the person on how to improve themselves and become pure again.

The Sfat Emet on this parsha similarly suggests that the Kohen's role in the tzaraat process is not merely to identify the problem but to offer an opportunity for self-reflection and growth. The Kohen helps individuals recognize their weaknesses and enables them to grow and improve. This concept is also discussed in Mishna Avot chapter 6, where it states that true gratitude is acquired through the attribute of “Ohev Et HaTochehot” - loving rebuke. This means that individuals should not deny their faults but should recognize them as an opportunity for growth and development.

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My involvement over the past year at JLIC Jerusalem has shown me that building a strong and vibrant community is a challenging task which constantly requires identifying weak points and addressing areas for improvement. Through building JLIC Jerusalem in its inaugural year, I have witnessed firsthand how the process of bringing certain issues to light can enable community leaders to establish a strong foundation for growth and development. It is by recognizing the challenges that enables us to work together to create a supportive and warm environment for meaningful religious experiences. I am deeply grateful to everyone who is making the OU-JLIC community in Jerusalem possible. It is at their minyanim, shiurim, and other social events that I have been able to connect with other like-minded students and olim in their 20's while furthering my personal spiritual growth and acquiring tools for community building.

May we all internalize the lessons of the Kohen's involvement in the entire tzaraat process and use them to foster greater personal and communal growth. ■

The OU's Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus (JLIC) is creating and nurturing vibrant religious communities in Israel to support English-speaking college students and young professionals. JLIC Israel's goals include: building a warm and welcoming Jewish community for students and young professionals; providing engaging and dynamic Jewish education; providing a supportive home environment for Olim; providing resources for personal and religious growth, including personal mentoring, Aliyah support, religious guidance and leadership development. Current JLIC programs in Israel include: Reichman University - Herzliya; Bar Ilan University - Givat Shmuel; Tel Aviv University; Tel Aviv for Young Professionals; and Jerusalem. Contact: Rabbi Jonathan Shulman, Director of OU-JLIC in Israel shulmanj@ou.org

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Act Like An Adam

In Parshat Tazria, the Torah describes the severe halachot of tzaraat, a spiritual disease that afflicts the body, clothing, and home as a divine punishment. The Midrash in ויקרא רבה in Parshat Metzora says that the primary reason for tzaraat is lashon hara (gossip). Keeping that in mind, we can ask a few questions on the way our parsha introduces the halachot of tzaraat; “אָדָם כִּי,” “יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ,” which raises the question – why the word אדם and not “כִּי יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ”.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, in his peirush on the Chumash, states that whenever the Torah introduces mitzvot with the word “אדם,” it loudly and clearly instructs us of the idea of what a human was created to be, the full and highest potential that they could and should reach if they listen to these mitzvot. Therefore, the Torah uses “אדם” to convey that the person afflicted with tzaraat was supposed to be an אדם, the highest potential a human can achieve, but they acted improperly.

Furthermore, the reason the tzaraat appears on our skin and not somewhere else such as our mouths or our ears (where we listened and spoke lashon hara) is because it is through the skin that we touch and how we interact with the world.

A person who interacts with the world in a contentious, antagonistic manner gets punished in the very place that they sinned: they were supposed to act like an אדם and instead, their skin gets punished.

B”H we will all use the gifts God gave us to interact with the world and the people around us in the way Hashem knows we can.

Shabbat Shalom



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Don't Just Avoid Lashon Hara

In this week's parsha, the Torah describes צרעת, Tzora'at. The Rabbi's say, that one can get צרעת from speaking badly about one another, לשון הרע. So, maybe we should expect that the Talmud should also talk about לשון הטוב. But instead, the words לשון הטוב don't appear once in the entire Talmud. If it's a sin to speak לשון הרע, we should ask, is there an obligation to speak לשון הטוב?

To answer this question, we have to understand the two sides of what is לשון טוב. In פרקי אבות it says that רבן יוחנן בן זכאי had 5 great students and he gave praise to all of them. But, the gemara in מסכת ערכין warns us not to praise one another, as praise will lead to criticism.

How can there be 2 different teachings

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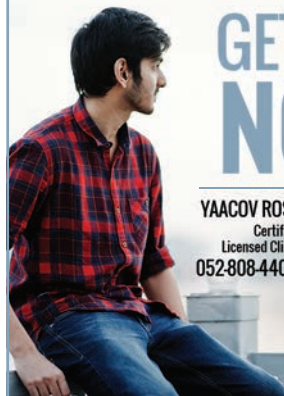
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on this matter?

Rashi and Rambam provide us with two answers.

Rashi says that if the praise is accurate, and not excessive, you should praise them. But if the praise is overstated, you shouldn't praise them.

However, Rambam says that it doesn't matter if the praise was excessive or not, rather, it matters who it is said in front of. If it will cause warmth - good feelings, you should praise them. But, if it will cause envy, you shouldn't.

Rashi and Rambam also argue about what is *ואהבת לרעך כמוך*, loving your neighbor as yourself. Rashi explains this to mean, do not do to your friend what you wouldn't want done to yourself. Rambam says the *פסוק* is here to teach us to praise one another.

It appears that the Rambam's explanation of this pasuk follows his understanding of *רבן יוחנן בן זכאי* where his praise of his students focused on each of their strengths.

Many of us are quite aware of the things we are bad at, our failings, and where we aren't as good or successful as others. *רבן יוחנן בן זכאי* teaches us to think about and focus on our strengths.

I think this is also the inferred message of *צרעת*. The Torah tells us not to speak *לשון הרע*. And, we can infer from this that we should also ensure to speak *לשון הטוב*. As *לשון הרע* tears people down and destroys, with *לשון הטוב* we can build and strengthen the people around us. Hopefully we can internalize the message of *צרעת*, and use it to show ourselves and others what we are good at, what are our strengths and to focus on them. ■ *שבת שלום*



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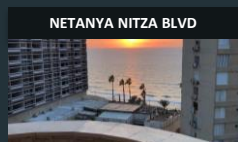
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Dr. Yael Ziegler is Rosh Batei Midrash of Matan and a senior lecturer in Tanach at Herzog College. She received her BA from Stern College and an MA and Ph.D. at Bar Ilan University. Dr. Ziegler has lectured widely on various Tanach topics in Israel, the United States, South Africa, Australia, and Europe and has authored multiple books on Tanach.



Rabbi Chanoch Waxman

First Things First: The Ceremony of the Stones

An alumnus of Har Etzion, Rabbi Chanoch Waxman currently teaches at Yeshivat Har Etzion. He received Semicha from Yeshiva University and also holds an M.A. in Jewish Philosophy from Yeshiva University as well as an M.A. in General Philosophy from City University of New York. In Israel, Rabbi Waxman teaches at Yeshivat Har Etzion and has taught in many Midrashot and Yeshivot around the country. Rabbi Waxman is featured speaker and writer for Yeshivat Har Etzion's Virtual Beit Midrash.



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An alumnus of Har Etzion, Rav Hattin teaches Tanach and Halakha at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and serves as the Coordinator of the Beit Midrash for the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators. He studied for semicha at Yeshivat Har Etzion and holds a professional degree in architecture from the University of Toronto. Rabbi Hattin is the author of several books on Tanach.



Tuesday, May 2, 2023



SNAC



9:00am Light Breakfast



**5 Kehillat Tzfat,
Netanya**



9:30am-12:15pm Program



Click Link to RSVP

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