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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON METZORA SHABBOS HAGADOL - 5763

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [[ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org)] To: [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org) Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Metzorah "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Metzorah  
This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 369, Bris Millah That Causes Chilul Shabbos.

### Remember What G-d Did To Miriam

Both Parshas Tazria and Parshas Metzora deal extensively with the laws of Tzaraas. The Talmud [Eruchin 15b] says that the plague of Tzaraas is a consequence of the sin of Lashon Hara [improper speech]. Tzaraas was a 'miraculous' disease, which occurred when the Bais Hamikdash was still standing. If a person spoke evil about someone else, first his home was affected. If he did not repent, his clothes were affected. If he still did not repent, his body was ultimately affected. He had to separate from civilization. He was publicly proclaimed an "impure person" as a result of his evil speech.

In Parshas Ki Teizeh, the Torah writes "Guard against the plague of Tzaraas, guard exceedingly and do all that will be instructed to you by the Kohanim, the Levites. As I commanded them, thus you shall observe to do." [Devorim 24:8] Immediately after this pasuk, the Torah commands [24:9] "Remember that which HaShem your G-d did to Miriam on the road at the time you went out of Egypt." Miriam spoke "lashon hara" about her brother. She was stricken with "Tzaraas". As a result, she was sent outside the camp. The Torah is reminding us about this event.

When Miriam was sent outside the camp as a result of her "Tzaraas", the entire camp waited for her for seven days. No one traveled. No one moved forward. Everyone waited for Miriam. [Bamidbar 12:1-16]

Why did they wait for her? Why didn't they move on and force her to catch up with them later? Our Sages teach us that the Jewish people waited for Miriam as a 'reward' or 'payback' to her for having waited for her brother, Moshe, when his basket was placed in the Nile [Shmos 2:4]. Now the Jewish People waited for her.

If we were in Miriam's shoes, we might very well have not wanted such a 'payback'. If she had the option, she might very well have preferred that the Jewish nation travel on without her, with the intent of "catching up with them" later. Most likely, the last thing she would have wanted would have been to cause everyone to wait for a whole week with nowhere to go. Everyone would be asking one another "Why aren't we moving?" The answer would be "It is Miriam's fault. It is because she spoke evil words about her brother." What kind of 'reward' or proper 'payback' is this for her?

The answer to this question can be found in a passage in Rambam in his Yad HaChazakah [Tum'as Tzaraas 16:10]. The

Rambam does not usually launch into philosophical discussions in his legal code (Mishneh Torah), but in this case he writes as follows:

"...and concerning this matter we are warned in the Torah. 'Remember that which HaShem your G-d did to Miriam on the road'. The Torah is saying, contemplate what happened to the prophetess Miriam. She spoke about her younger brother who she loved and helped raise. She had endangered her own life to save him from the Nile. She (furthermore) did not speak malicious evil about him. She just erred by equating his greatness to that of other prophets (who do not separate themselves from their wives). And Moshe was not bothered by any of her comments, as it is written 'And the man Moshe was extremely modest'. And nevertheless she was immediately punished with Tzaraas. Kal v'Chomer [how much more so] how great a punishment will be coming to those wicked fools who frequently speak great and wondrous (criticisms).

The Rambam is saying that Miriam's Lashon HaRah is really not typical Lashon HaRah. It was not said maliciously. It was not said to harm anyone. It did not harm anyone. It was an innocent mistake. But such is the power of Lashon HaRah -- whether it is ill intended or well intended, it is like poison. Regardless of the reason why poison is taken, it kills. The same is true regarding Lashon HaRah.

Therefore, when the Torah says "Sit out in the wilderness and remember what Miriam did for Moshe (when she waited for his basket by the Nile)," the Torah is not denigrating Miriam. She is not being criticized. She is righteous. The Torah is saying, "while you are waiting for Miriam, keep in mind the destructive power of Lashon HaRah." If what she just did is considered Lashon HaRah and is deserving of such a punishment, certainly how much more so regarding denigrating Lashon HaRah.

Miriam was truly righteous and had nothing about which to be embarrassed. Her action was really not a sin at all. It was just a 'mistake'. And yet we see the powerful consequences. This is the lesson of 'Remember that which HaShem your G-d did to Miriam'.

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Subject: Kosherquest.org by Rabbi Eliezer Eidlitz

[http://www.kosherquest.org/html/PASSOVER\\_OBSERVANCE.HTM](http://www.kosherquest.org/html/PASSOVER_OBSERVANCE.HTM)

RABBI ELIEZER EIDLITZ

[Emek Hebrew Academy]

CHOMETZ ON PESACH

Chometz is any substance containing leavening from one of five cereal grains (wheat, barley, oats, spelt, or rye) caused by its prolonged contact with water or other liquids. This prohibition of Chometz on Pesach includes Chometz Gomur (unmixed Chometz) and Ta'aruvus Chometz (a mixture containing real Chometz). There are three areas with which we must be concerned when evaluating Chometz. First, there is Isur Hana'ah, that is, not deriving any pleasure or benefit whatsoever from the Chometz (e.g. feeding Chometz to your pets, etc.). Secondly, a Jew may not own Chometz. This prohibition extends to possession of Chometz anywhere in the world (such as in a boat, mountain retreat, etc.). Thirdly, there is a prohibition against having Chometz in our possession. We must be careful to remove all Chometz from our premises. We are not allowed to leave Chometz in our possession on Pesach even if we do not intend to use it,

and we don't own it. An annoying problem that often occurs on Pesach is the arrival in the mail of Chometz samples, such as Cheerios, etc. If this happens, they should be left outside in the mailbox all of Pesach, and one should specifically intend not to own them during Pesach. One should be careful as well not to send a package which contains Chometz to Israel too close to Pesach, as it may arrive during Pesach.

#### KITNIYOS AND MATZO ASHIRA

Due to the stringency of not eating chometz on Pesach, Ashkenazic Jews have developed a custom not to eat Kitniyos (legumes) on Pesach. Kitniyos includes beans, rice, green beans, peas, millet, corn, mustard, lentils and lecithin. Many people refrain from eating peanuts, too. This restriction of peanuts however, does not include peanut oil (according to the opinion of Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"L.) Legumes are permitted for some Sephardic Jews who, for various historical reasons, did not adopt this custom of refraining from Kitniyos consumption on Pesach. This is why the Kosher consumer is confronted yearly with a confusing array of Hechsherim found on candies and jams, mustard and other products containing legumes. In reality, these products are edible on Pesach by only certain groups of Jews. Every Jew, however, is permitted to derive benefit from Kitniyos.

There is a similar problem concerning Matzo Ashira, such as egg matzo and chocolate covered egg matzos, which are only acceptable under certain conditions. Ashkenazic Jews, when doing their Pesach shopping, should be careful of products which contain corn oil, lecithin, glucose or emulsifiers, because these ingredients are often made from legumes.

#### BITUL OF CHOMETZ

During the year, non-Kosher ingredients that inadvertently become mixed with Kosher ingredients may be halachically fit to eat. The reason for this leniency is that they are declared "Batel Beshishim" (annulled in sixty). Thus if the quantity of Kosher ingredients is more than sixty times that of the non-Kosher ingredients, the Kosher will nullify the non-Kosher. This rule is true regarding Chometz on Pesach only if the mixture was made before Pesach. During Pesach, the laws of "bitul" are not applicable. In other words, during Pesach week, if even a tiny amount of Chometz falls into a large amount of Kosher-for-Pesach food, it renders the food unfit for use on Pesach. As in all such halachic questions, a competent Rav should be consulted. Lactaid drops may contain Chometz. They should be added to the milk before Pesach.

#### CONSUMPTION OF CHOMETZ

Since the prohibition of eating Chometz on Pesach applies not only to Chometz itself, but to any derivatives of Chometz or to any product that may contain Chometz, one should make certain that all food products that are bought for Pesach should have a certification by a reliable Kashrus organization or Orthodox Rabbi.

#### HANA'AH (BENEFIT) FROM CHOMETZ

During Pesach, we may not derive any sort of benefit from Chometz. It, therefore, may not be sold or used, even in business transactions or as pet food. Even some cosmetics must be Chometz free. Generally, there is no problem with the following products if they are not organic in nature and do not contain any grain by-products: Acne Aid, Mineral Oil, Baby Cream, Baby Oil, Eye Liner, Mascara, Rouge (Powder), Nail Polish, Talcum Powder, Stick Powder Deodorant, and Vaseline.

#### MECHIRAS (SELLING OF) CHOMETZ

Mechiras Chometz is the sale of Jewish-owned chometz to a non-Jew before Pesach. We must sell chometz that is in our regular homes, vacation homes, etc. This transfer of chometz to a non-Jew is a legal and binding sale, complete with contract. This sale is transacted through a Rabbi, who acts as an agent to sell the Jew's chometz to a non-Jew. The Rabbi enters into an agreement with the non-Jew for the sale of this chometz. The chometz that has been sold must be placed in a totally sealed-off area, and must remain there throughout the holiday of Pesach. One must be careful to inform the Rabbi if they intend to be in a different time zone for Pesach. They do not want to have their Chometz bought back if it is still Pesach where they are, (i.e. overseas, etc.) ...

#### EIRUV TAVSHILIN

This year the first two days of Yom Tov are followed immediately by Shabbos. This presents a problem of when we may cook for Shabbos. Normally, we are prohibited from cooking from one day of Yom Tov for the next, and likewise from Yom Tov for Shabbos. Recognizing the difficulty of cooking three days in advance for Shabbos, Chazal came up with an alternative. This consists of beginning the cooking process for Shabbos before Yom Tov, and concluding the preparations on Yom Tov Erev

Shabbos. The official start of Shabbos cooking is done Wednesday by cooking an egg or other small part of a meal and setting it aside with a matzo for Shabbos. We then recite the Brocho and declaration as stated in the Siddur for Eiruv Tavshilin. If a person forgot to do this on Erev Yom Tov, they should ask their local rabbi what to do.

#### CHOMETZ SHE'AVAR ALAV HAPESACH (BUYING CHOMETZ AFTER PESACH)

Due to the severity of the "Issur" (prohibition) of chometz, Chazal reinforced the sale of chometz with a fine. The form of this fine was levied on any Jew who kept chometz in his possession or ownership during Pesach. This is called "Chometz She'avar Alav HaPesach." The law requires that if a Jew owns chometz on Pesach, no Jew is allowed to eat that food even after Pesach. We are therefore also prohibited from buying from stores that are Jewish owned, if they have not sold their chometz.

Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"L in his sefer Igros Moshe, states that if a Jew sold his chometz for Pesach and then kept his store open during Pesach and continued to sell items of chometz, we are nevertheless allowed to buy from that store after Pesach. ...

#### KASHERING UTENSILS

Utensils used during the year for Chometz use may not be used to prepare food for Pesach unless they are properly Kasher. Cloth tablecloths (not plastic) and towels used year round should be washed thoroughly and may then be used for Pesach.

Surfaces upon which only cold chometz has been placed during the year, such as refrigerators and pantry shelves, should be thoroughly washed and rinsed to ready them for Pesach use. Surfaces which are used for hot chometz during the year, must, in addition, be Kasher whenever possible, by pouring hot water on them and then covering with non-absorbent material, like contact paper, cardboard or aluminum foil.

To Kasher an electric range, first scour it thoroughly. Then, turn on the highest temperature setting for 15 minutes, or until it gets red-hot. Enamel-glazed stove tops should be covered during Pesach. Gas grates should be put in the oven for Kashing. The oven should be cleaned with a special solution, such as "Easy Off" and not used for 24 hours. After this time, it should be turned on to the maximum setting for one hour. This will Kasher the oven but not the broiler. The broiler is difficult to Kasher, therefore, it is usually not used for Pesach. If one desires to Kasher it, "Libbun" (glowing hot) is required (i.e., torch). Many microwave ovens without browning elements can be Kasher by first cleaning them and not using them for 24 hours and then putting new glass or cardboard on the bottom. Afterwards a cup or bowl of water should be boiled inside for at least twenty minutes. Self-cleaning ovens may be operated on the cleaning cycle and then used. A stainless-steel sink is Kasher after it has first been cleaned, and then kept free from hot water usage for 24 hours. Then pour boiling water over its entire surface. Porcelain sinks, however, may not be Kasher. They should be fully lined with a tin insert, or contact paper, or aluminum foil, and a Pesach basin inserted.

Metal utensils that are used with liquid (soup pots, etc.) can be Kasher by first cleaning them, then not using them for twenty-four hours, and finally immersing them in a Kasher pot full of boiling water for 15 seconds, followed by rinsing them in cold water immediately upon removal. They should be Kasher one at a time.

Braces, bite plates and retainers should be brushed thoroughly before Pesach. China, porcelain, "Corning Ware", plastic, stoneware, synthetics, synthetic rubber, melmac, pyrex, earthenware, and teflon-coated utensils cannot be Kasher. These items should be washed well and put away until after Pesach. Formica counter tops should be covered. Granite counter tops can be Kasher by pouring boiling hot water on them. (Eirui)

#### EATING ON EREV PESACH

The eating of Chometz is prohibited on Erev Pesach, from a third of the day and thereafter. In addition, it is forbidden to eat Matzo on Erev Pesach. This prohibition includes cakes or cookies that are baked with matzo meal. In order that the Matzo at the Seder be eaten with a "hearty appetite", it is prohibited on Erev Pesach to eat anything that is baked with Matzoh or Matzoh by-products. Other foods should only be eaten in moderation from the ninth hour in the day and on.

#### EREV PESACH (FAST OF THE FIRST BORN)

Erev Pesach this year, commences on Wednesday March 31, 1999. SIYUM: Males who are first born and do not wish to fast should attend a siyum and eat at the meal following it. This meal is called a Seudas Mitzvah.

## SELECTED LAWS AND CUSTOMS

One should prepare everything for the Seder on Erev Pesach in order that the Seder should begin immediately upon arriving from Shul. This includes setting the table, etc. It is a custom that pillows should be prepared for leaning on during the Seder. Women are not required to lean, however, male children are. It is also a custom among some that the head of the household wears a kittel during the Seder. In most places, the custom is that only the head of the household has a Seder plate and the three Matzos. Some, however, have a Seder plate and Matzos for each man present at the Seder. When only the head of the household has a Seder plate, he must provide for everyone at the Seder from his plate. Since there is usually not a sufficient amount of Matzos and Marror on the Seder plate for everyone, additional Matzo and Marror should be placed on the table for supplementary use. One should be certain to have enough Matzo, marror and wine to enable everyone present (male and female) to eat and drink the required amounts during the Seder.

## THE SEDER

One must not use MARROR (to fulfill the Mitzvah of Marror) that was soaked for 24 hours or longer. Soaking this long can halachically be considered cooking and we must only use uncooked vegetables for Marror. (Do not lean when eating marror.)

CHAROSES can be made of ground apples, pears, pomegranates, dates, figs, walnuts, almonds, ginger and cinnamon, to which wine is added. KARPAS is any vegetable upon which a bracho of "HaAdama" is made, is of the type to be dipped in salt water or vinegar, and is the type of vegetable which can be used on Pesach. Parsley, celery, and potatoes are often used as Karpas. The ZROA is a piece of meat roasted over the fire. Most people use a chicken neck or wing for this purpose. The BAITZA is an ordinary hard-boiled or roasted egg. If one forgot to roast the Zroa or Baitza on Erev Pesach and had to do it at night, he must eat it before sunset of the next day.

## THE ARBA KOSOS (FOUR CUPS OF WINE)

It is preferable that the wine used at the Seder be red in color. For those who cannot drink wine, grape juice may be used. Nevertheless, one should make every effort to drink wine at the Seder. If necessary, wine and grape juice may be mixed. The cups of wine should contain at least 3.3 fluid ounces. It is preferable to drink the entire cup, or at least half of it. Men must consume all cups of wine while reclining on their left side. If one drank either of the first two cups without so reclining, he must drink it again without a brocho. Many Kosher wines are not cooked, and care must be taken as to who handles them. (Most bottles that are cooked say "Mevushal" in English or Hebrew on the label) Caution: since not everyone may use grape juice instead of wine, we suggest that you consult your Rabbi as to when this would apply.

## MATZO

Only Matzo Sh'mura (i.e. guarded Matzo,) which is made of grain that has been guarded against fermentation from the time of harvest, should be used for the Mitzva of eating Matzo at the Seder. Both hand and machine Matzos Sh'mura are acceptable. The consumption of Matzo Ashira is prohibited for most people throughout Pesach. Matzo Ashira is any Matzo that contains products other than flour and water. Included in this category are: Matzo which was kneaded with fruit juice, egg matzo, tea matzo, honey and spice matzo and chocolate-covered matzo. This prohibition, however, does not apply to infants or people who are ill. When in doubt, consult your Rabbi. Even one who is allowed to eat Matzo Ashira, cannot fulfill the mitzvah of Achilas Matzo with it. For people allergic to wheat, Oat Shmura Matzo is available by calling (908) 370-8460 or by Fax (908) 370-2997. To order Spelt Matzo call (718) 599-5878.

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From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalists@shemayisrael.com] To: Peninim Parsha  
PENINIM ON THE TORAH  
BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM  
Parshas Metzora

This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification: he shall be brought to the Kohen. (14:2) The Kohen has the first and last word in

regard to negaim, plagues. Toras Kohanim states that it is a gezeiras haKasuv, Biblical edict, that the rendering of tumah and taharah, impurity or purity, is solely in the hands of the Kohanim. Sforno adds that the Kohanim are the ones who teach and guide the people in the spiritual dimension. Interfacing with them all will encourage the metzora, afflicted sinner, to repent and mend his ways.

While the Kohen is the decisor concerning negaim, Chazal say that "one can see/inspect all negaim, except his own." Even a simple, clean-cut plague cannot be decided by the Kohen - if it is his own plague. This teaches us that the closer one is to an object/subject, the less objectivity he has. The ability to see clearly becomes greatly impeded. A judge may not accept shochad, a bribe, because bribery blinds the judge's ability to see. In the Talmud Kesubos 105b, Chazal say that the word shochad is made up of the words shehu chad, "he becomes one". The judge who accepts a bribe becomes "one" with the litigant, obscuring his objectivity.

The Baal Shem Tov takes an alternative approach to Chazal's objection to one viewing and rendering judgment on his own plagues. He explains it homiletically. All plagues that a person sees chutz, in someone else, are a reflection of nigei atzmo, his own shortcomings. He goes as far as to say that one who is free of any failing will not be able to see anything wrong in another person.

Horav Moshe Reis, Shlita, relates that when the saintly Belzer Rebbe, zl, moved to Tel Aviv, whenever he saw a car moving on Shabbos, he would assume that it was a woman on the way to the hospital to deliver a baby or it was a medical emergency in transit. He could not fathom that chillul Shabbos, desecration of the Holy Day, was occurring. He always felt that anyone who drove on Shabbos only did so for a serious medical emergency.

The Baal Shem Tov writes that one who sees bad in another person, it is like looking through a mirror - he sees a part of himself. Consequently, he feels that one should relate to another person's failing as he would to his own. Just as he finds a way to gloss over his own shortcomings, so, too, should he be able to seek justification for his fellow's inappropriate behavior.

The Rambam in Hilchos Isurei Biah 19:17 writes that "all Jewish families are b'chezkas kashrus, in a state of purity, and one may marry into any family. If, however, a member of the family has a brazen personality, contends with everyone and does not get along with people in general, it is sufficient reason to distance oneself from that family. Furthermore, if a member of the family is always finding fault in others, questioning people's pedigree and calling them mamzeirim, illegitimate - we may suspect that he himself is of illegitimate descent."

The bottom line is that he who is always finding fault in others probably has a defective character himself. It is this deficiency that is provoking his malignant perspective of people.

Considering the above idea, we are better able to understand a number of Chazal's maxims. In the Talmud Sotah 2a, Chazal say, "One who sees a sotah, wayward wife, b'kilkulah, in her degradation, should prohibit wine to himself by becoming a nazir." While it is certainly important that one takes the sotah's degradation to heart, why should he become a nazir? He has not sinned. He just happened to be walking by when she was being publicly shamed. Is that sufficient reason for him to become a nazir? Whatever happened to the concept of "innocent bystander"?

Rav Reis explains that had there not been a serious dormant deficiency within the psyche of the innocent bystander, he would not have seen the sotah. The fact that he saw, that he was privy to her degradation, transforms him into a "not so" innocent bystander. Hashem is conveying a message to him - one which he should immediately act upon.

The Toldos Yaakov Yosef applies this idea to Chazal's dictum in Pirkei Avos 4:1, "Who is a wise man? He who learns from all men." The phrase "all men" means all men, regardless of their background and level of observance and virtue. If one notices a failing in his friend, he should take it as a message that a trace of this shortcoming is also a part of himself. Regrettably, too many of us are so obsessed with looking at our friends' failings that we disregard the message this deficit is communicating to us.

This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification. (14:2) One who is determined to correct the sin of lashon hora is confronted with two paradoxical issues. One the one hand, Chazal teach us that the Torah goes out of its way not to reveal any failing whatsoever even in regard to an inanimate object. The Midrash teaches us that Hashem did not reveal the specie of the Eitz Hadaas, Tree of Knowledge, because an aveirah,

sin, was actualized through it. We see this idea in regard to an animal with whom a woman had an immoral relationship: it is killed. While we understand that the woman should be put to death for her iniquity, why do we blame the "innocent" animal? Chazal explain that it would be improper for the animal to be walking around the marketplace in full view of the populace, so that people would remark, "That is the animal which was the cause of that woman's death." Seeing the animal recalls the iniquity, as well as the person who was involved. We see from here the extent to which the Torah goes to spare anyone any shame - even a hardened sinner. Yet, we find a mitzvah in the Torah that stands in direct contradiction to this rule. The Torah in Sefer Devarim 24:9 admonishes us, to "Remember what Hashem, Your G-d, did to Miriam on the way, when you were leaving Egypt." Ramban notes that this mitzvah is a positive commandment with the same weight as the mitzvah, "Remember the Shabbos Day to keep it holy". We are taught to learn and remember the result of Miriam's unfair criticism of her brother, Moshe Rabbeinu. The tragic punishment was tzaraas covering her entire body. We now wonder why, on the one hand, the Torah does not reveal the specie of the Eitz Hadaas due to its negative effect on mankind, but reveals - and even makes a mitzvah out of revealing - Miriam's criticism and its tragic consequences? Why is the Torah not just as concerned with Miriam's esteem as it is with the inanimate Tree of Knowledge?

Horav Mordechai Miller, zl, explains that the incident with Miriam teaches us a lesson. It is Miriam's eternal privilege that her ordeal reminds every generation of Jews that death and life are in the power of the tongue. The prohibition of lashon hora does not apply when it can be helpful and meaningful to people. The Torah publicizes the episode with Miriam because we can learn from it. Her ordeal has a therapeutic effect on others, helping to guide them.

We must add that while lashon hora is a terrible sin with dire consequences, keeping still and not speaking up when someone's name is being disparaged is equally reprehensible.

The Torah admonishes us in Sefer Vayikra 19:16, "You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people; you shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is shed". One is prohibited from telling someone what others have said about him behind his back, if there is even the slightest possibility that it will cause ill will. A rachil is related to the word rocheil, peddler, because a gossipmonger is like a peddler who goes around "peddling" his filthy gossip. He is a sick person who thrives on hurting others. He is a backstabber who receives his enjoyment in life from hurting people behind their backs. The pasuk begins with the gossipmonger and ends with the enjoinder not to stand aside when our fellow's blood is being spilled. Horav Chaim zl, m'Volozhin explains the juxtaposition. While it is prohibited to gossip, it is equally forbidden to stand by idly as someone's reputation is being slandered. One who is quiet, who suddenly becomes self-righteous at a time when another person's name is being sullied by people who are either sick, envious or puerile followers - who will do anything for attention - is guilty of standing by while his fellow's blood is being shed! Lashon hora is a dreadful sin; murder is much worse!

Cedarwood, crimson thread and hyssop. (14:4)

The sin of lashon hora has its roots in arrogance. The sinner possesses a moral flaw, a character deficiency which allows him to think that he is better, more intelligent and more virtuous than others. He is the savior that is going to rid the world of those whom he perceives to be corrupt. He overlooks one thing: his own haughtiness, which breeds contempt for others, provokes him to think ill of them, catalyzing him to speak callously about them. The teshuvah, repentance, process takes this into consideration by making him bring cedarwood, crimson thread and hyssop along with his sacrifice, so that he will first purge himself of his addictive arrogance before he eventually achieves atonement.

The cedarwood represents the individual's haughtiness, as the cedar tree grows tall and imposing. The crimson thread is dyed red with a dye from a lowly creature, and the hyssop is a lowly bush; both symbolize the sinner's newly-found humility.

Sefer HaMeshalim offers a powerful analogy that lends insight into the underlying source of arrogance. A donkey was once loaded with strong perfumes, whose pleasant odor was sensed at a distance. As it walked through the streets, the donkey noted with pride how people tried to come close to him. Of course, being a donkey, this went to his head. When he returned to the stable that evening, the donkey was all mouth as he

pompously talked about his greatness and how all the people sought to get close to him.

The next day the load was different. The donkey was carrying fertilizer, which had a strong, fetid odor. As the donkey walked through the streets, people moved as far away as they could. No one would go near the beast with its foul-smelling burden. When the donkey returned to his stable that evening, he was as arrogant as before: "Today the people were really running scared of me. They were intimidated by my presence and ran from me. You see, one day I can have people falling over me, and the next day I can have them running in fear."

The wise fox who overheard the donkey's foolish braying came over and said, "Foolish donkey that you are. It is not you that people fear or love. It is your load. When you carry perfume, they gravitate to the wonderful smell. When you are carrying fertilizer, they run from the foul odor. They could care less about you. You are nothing. It is what you carry that determines the way people react to you."

The same idea applies to people. The baal gaaveh, arrogant person, thinks that everyone respects and fears him. Little does he realize that it is all in his mind. The baal gaaveh has a powerful imagination. He has conjured up in his mind that everybody reveres and admires him, when, in reality, it is far from true. A mind is a terrible thing to waste, especially if it is being wasted on an imaginary obsession with oneself.

Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house. (14:35)

Otzar Chaim has a wonderful thought regarding the teshuvah process and how the Kohen or rav can achieve the greatest success with the sinner. In the Mishnah Negaim 2:3, Chazal state that in a house which is dark - and, therefore, difficult for the Kohen to see the nega, plague - we do not open the windows to increase the light and make the nega more accessible. We can derive a profound lesson from this halachah. It is a message to the Kohanim, rabbanim, to anyone whose function it is to rebuke, to reproach, to guide and mentor: Do not search for sins. Do not drive the sinner away by searching for more sins, by delving into the reason the person has sinned. If the sinner opens up on his own - fine, but do not depress him any more than necessary, because you will only succeed in turning him away. A house that is dark, is analogous to the sinner who confesses to an indiscretion, but does not want to elaborate on it. Leave him alone. His confession is sufficient grounds for you to begin working with him, reaching out to him to bring him closer. Do not elaborate his sins; it will only distance him from continuing his teshuvah.

Then there is the flip-side: the choteh, sinner, who feels he has to unload himself of every sin that he has ever committed. The story is told that a baal teshuvah once came to Horav Eliyahu Gutmacher, zl, and asked him to prepare a teshuvah process for him. While Rav Eliyahu was perusing a sefer in an attempt to respond to the young man, the baal teshuvah began confessing his sins. He did not stop. He just kept enumerating sin after sin as if there were no end. Rav Eliyahu looked up from his sefer and said, "It is enough! You do not have to continue detailing your sins. I have one question, however, which bothers me as I listen to your litany of sins. What did Hashem do to you that provoked you to sin against Him so much?"

What a powerful and compelling question! We do it all the time. We sin - we repent - and we sin again. Do we ever wonder what our actions are doing to Hashem? In our smug arrogance, we only think of ourselves: Our sin, our teshuvah. We never think about the effect of our actions in Heaven. Hashem is a loving Father Who tolerates so much iniquity, but do we ever think about it from His point of view? What did He ever do to us that we should pay Him back in such a manner?

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From: Midei Lists [rachrysl@netvision.net.il] To: Midei Parsha Parshas Metzora

MIDEI SHABBOS

BY RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER

Vol. 10 No. 28 This issue is co-sponsored Il'uy Nishmas Hena Hitza bas Eliyahu (Anne Dodick, mother of Risa Rotman) z"l on the occasion of her third yohrzeit and

by an anonymous sponsor with the wish that we witness the fulfillment of Chazal be'Nisan nig'alu, u've'Nisan asidin li'go'el Parshas Metzora (Shabbos HaGadol) The Fruits of Lashon ha'Ra Nega'im, say Chazal, come as a result of speaking evil. And this is hinted in the very word 'Metzora', which is the acronym of 'Motzi ra' (one who

emits evil [from his mouth]). We know of course, that this pertains specifically to the evil of Lashon ha'Ra. Yet the term 'motzi ra' applies equally to other forms of evil speech, such as lies and unclean talk, and one wonders to what extent it actually incorporates them. Particularly as many of the reasons given to explain the severity of Lashon ha'Ra apply to them too.

Lashon ha'ra is such a terrible sin, that not only may one not speak evil about others, but the Chachamim forbade speaking even good about them for fear that this will lead to somebody throwing in a negative comment (... 'But did you know ...').

Similarly, they also extended the prohibition to saying about someone, something that is not detrimental per se, but that might be construed detrimentally, such as 'In Reuven's house, you can always find fire', implying that they are always merrymaking there, and so they are always cooking. This is called 'Avak lashon-ha'ra', and is forbidden, whether the speaker has those connotations in mind or not. Based on these two points, the Alter from Kelm interpreted three Pesukim in Tehilim (39:2-4) in the following manner. "Omarti eshmeroh derochai me'chato bi'l'shoni" (David Hamelech describes how careful he had been to avoid sinning with his mouth). "Ne'elamti dumyah, hechesheisi mi'tov" (I kept my mouth shut, not only from speaking evil, but also from speaking good). "U'che'eivi ne'ekar" (so why was I made to suffer so many yisurin). "Cham libi be'kirbi" (then the realisation hit me) "ba'hagigi tiv'ar eish" (that I was prone to saying things like 'you can always find fire' [Chazal's analogy for avak Lashon-ha'ra] in so-and-so's house) "dibarti bi'l'shoni" (because that too, is considered Lashon-ha'ra, and explained adequately why I was made to suffer).

The Wise Pedlar The Medrash tells the story of a pedlar who went from town to town, announcing that he was selling the elixir of life. When Rabbi Yanai heard him, he came to make his purchase, but the pedlar declined to sell it to him, explaining that his wares were not meant for people of his calibre.

When Rabbi Yanai persisted however, he took out a Seifer Tehilim and showed him the Pesukim (34:13/14) "Who is the person who wants life? Guard your tongue from evil ...".

'My entire life', Rabbi Yanai exclaimed, 'I read this Pasuk, and I never realised how far it went, until this peddler came and showed me!'

\* It is not at first clear what the peddler showed Rabbi Yanai that he did not already know. The Kochav mi'Ya'akov explains however, that Rabbi Yanai had always assumed that the reward for Lashon ha'ra is payable in the World to Come. It never dawned on him that one can reap the dividends of avoiding this sin in this world too. By referring to the antidote to Lashon-ha'ra as an elixir of life, the pedlar indicated that guarding one's tongue against evil actually improves one's health and increases one's life expectancy in this world too. How is that?

It is an undisputable fact that holding one's tongue decreases Machlokes, hatred and anger, Midos that affect the heart adversely and curtail one's life. It stands to reason therefore, that the absence of these evils will have the opposite effect, granting a person a longer and healthier life, not to speak of upgrading its quality. And this is what Rabbi Yanai learned from the peddler. Perhaps this is what Shlomo Hamelech meant when he wrote in Mishlei (8:21) "Death and life lie in the hand of the tongue", where presumably "life", like "death", refers to life here, in this world.

Another important lesson that Rabbi Yanai learned from the pedlar is that it is not enough for a person to guard himself against Lashon-hara, but that one is obligated to pass on the lesson to others, too.

If you feel the urge to speak evil about someone, the Besht was wont to say, then speak about yourself. Whereas if you feel you want to speak good about someone, then best speak about Hashem.

\*

The Power of a Word People generally speak Lashon-ha'ra: a. because they think that having said what they have to say, nothing remains of what was said, and so, it will quickly be forgotten; and b. because they assume that being intangible, speech is basically harmless. To be sure, many people who will speak freely about their friends, would never dream of striking them. In answer to the first argument, the Medrash cites G-d Himself, who warns that He sends an angel to record every word that one speaks against one's fellow-Jew. And in answer to the second, the Ohel Ya'akov points to the Kohen, whose word decides the fate of the Metzora. Until he declares him tamei, the Metzora remains tahor (in spite of the white mark which is there for all to see); and until he declares him Tahor,

he remains tamei (even though there is nothing on his body to suggest that he is).

THOUGHTS ON SHABBOS HAGADOL (Adapted from the B'nei Yisoschor) The Day Yisrael became 'a Gadol' Based on the Gemara in Kidushin (31a), the B'nei Yisoschor quoting the Olelos Ephrayim, explains why the Shabbos before Pesach is called 'Shabbos ha'Gadol'. The Gemara there teaches us that someone who is commanded to perform a Mitzvah is on a higher level than someone who merely volunteers to do so ('Gadol ha'metzveh ve'oseh, mi'mi she'eino metzveh ve'oseh'). Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov kept the Taryag Mitzvos. But, with the notable exception of the Mitzvah of B'ris Milah, they volunteered to do so, without having been commanded. They were 'einan metzuvim ve'osin'. To whatever extent Yisrael in Egypt followed in their footsteps and kept some of the Mitzvos, they too, were 'einan metzuvim ve'osin'. Effectively then, all the good deeds that Yisrael had performed up until this time, were not a 'Mitzvos' at all.

When G-d commanded Yisrael "And each man shall take a lamb ...", this was the first time that Yisrael became 'metzuvim ve'osin'. That is why Rashi (in Bereishis) explains that the Torah ought to have begun with this Parshah. A new era had begun. Like a child who becomes a gadol when he turns bar-mitzvah and becomes 'metzveh ve'oseh', so too, did Yisrael become a gadol on the Shabbos that they performed their first Mitzvah - when they took the lamb for the Korban Pesach. They had become G-d's nation, because they were performing His Mitzvos.

And what an appropriate beginning that was! G-d could not have chosen a better Mitzvah than the Korban Pesach, to initiate K'lal Yisrael in their new role. For this Korban was a declaration that they had relinquished their attachment to the gods that they worshipped up to that time, and now undertook to worship the One and only G-d. In fact, it was a practical demonstration of what would later be the first Mitzvah that they heard at Har Sinai, the Mitzvah of - "Onochi", which serves as the basis for the entire Torah. And not only that, but they jumped in at the deep end, performing the Mitzvah with mesiras nefesh (self-sacrifice), risking their lives in doing what they must have known would invite the fiercest Egyptian opposition, as they abused the Egyptian gods, slaughtered them and ate them.

The ideal Mitzvah performed under ideal circumstances!

The Day G-d (kevayachol) Became 'Gadol' ... In another explanation, the B'nei Yisoschor explains that the Egyptians worshipped the lamb, because it represented the Mazel Aires (Lamb), the first of the Mazolos. They believed that the Mazolos were the highest form of power and that they governed the world.

When, at the command of Hashem, Yisrael tied the lambs to their bed-posts, in order to Shecht it and sprinkle its blood, they demonstrated that the G-d of Yisrael was superior to the Mazolos. Moreover, the capture of the lamb for the sake of Hashem reflected their belief that the G-d of Yisrael had created the Mazalos and continued to rule over them. This act of faith would reach its climax, when they slaughtered and ate the lamb, even as Hashem confirmed their faith by negating its power and killing the Egyptian firstborn in the middle of the month of Nisan - when Aires was at its zenith.

And this took place on Shabbos, which in itself, serves as a testimony that G-d created the world, as the Torah writes with regard to the Shabbos "because in six days Hashem created the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested ...". In short, this was a demonstration that 'G-d is greater than all the gods' ("ki Gadol Hashem mi'kol elohim"), and that it is why it is called 'Shabbos Hagadol'. Because Yisrael became great on that day, whereas G-d's greatness was acknowledged.

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From: National Council of Young Israel [YI\_Torah@lb.bcentral.com]  
Subject: Parshat Metzora (Shabbat HaGadol) Parshat Metzora (Shabbat HaGadol) 10 Nissan 5763 April 12, 2003 Daf Yomi: Avodah Zara 30  
Guest Author: RABBI CHAIM SHAPIRO

As we approach the Pesach holidays, most of us have mixed feelings in regard to this celebration. Although we normally look forward with great anticipation to all the positive elements of this Yom Tov, this year most of us are disturbed by the turmoil in the world. War and terrorism concern all

Americans but the worldwide epidemic of anti-semitism and the desperate efforts of our brethren in Israel to survive, leads many of us to cry out in despair. We ask, "When will all this terrible violence and baseless hatred end?". We recall the Yiddish expression, "Zoll shein zein dee Geula!" (Let us have the redemption already!) When will the "Mashiach" come?

With this thought in mind, let's investigate a noted Mishneh (Masechet Rosh HaShonah) which may shed some light on this topic. The Mishneh starts with the question, "When should we celebrate Rosh HaShonah?" The response involves a disagreement, a debate between two Talmudic giants, Reb Eliezer and Reb Yehoshua. Reb Eliezer claims that Rosh HaShanah should be celebrated on the first of Tishrei. He bases his view on our tradition that Adam HaRishon was born/created on that date. Reb Yehoshua disagrees and says Rosh HaShanah should be celebrated on the first of Nisan. His opinion is based on the Chumash's counting Nisan as the first calendar month of the year. It seems obvious that the decision accepts Reb Eliezer's view, as per our Jewish calendars.

The Mishneh then continues with a discussion on when the Mashiach will come. The debate/machloket seems to follow the same path. Reb Eliezer again favors Rosh HaShanah as the suitable time for the arrival of the Mashiach, while Reb Yehoshua again chooses the first of Nisan as the appropriate time for his arrival. What is the basis for this debate? I believe their positions are consistent with the two major scenarios that are described in the Gemorah.

One proposal is that the Mashiach will come at a time when our people deserve his arrival. That is, when all Jews are pure and observant they will merit Moshiachs' arrival. After all, G-d bases His actions on justice and therefore the Mashiach's arrival, bringing a true redemption for our people would dictate the prerequisite that they are worthy of this event! When is this possible? According to Reb Eliezer, this could only occur after the Yomim Noraim, after Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, when all Jews should have done complete, sincere Teshuva/repentance!

Reb Yehoshua takes a different track, with a completely opposite scenario. Using Pesach as his model, he points out that before their freedom from Egyptian slavery, our ancestors had sunk to such a low spiritual status that they were in danger of being completely erased from the world scene! Scheduled to be in Egypt for 400 years, but since their position was so perilous, G-d showed His tremendous love for our people with His gracious act of kindness, and freed them after only 210 years of being in Egypt. Likewise, we look to G-d's "Chesed"/ kindness to redeem us again, even though we are not worthy/deserving of that redemption.

On surveying our modern scene, neither of the two scenarios-where Jews are deserving of the coming of the Mashiach because they are all exemplary Jews or that they all are completely corrupt and require a Divine form of kindness to save them from imminent disappearance - are accurate for our times. On the one hand, we see the greatest growth of Torah study and observance, both qualitative and quantitative, in our history. At the same time, we are witnessing the greatest level of intermarriage, the most blatant forms of non-identification and an increasing gap between the "religious" community and the "anti-religious" segments of our people.

Therefore, I would like to suggest a third scenario, primarily based on Reb Yehoshua's thesis. This would formulate a situation where although we are not justified to demand a Messianic redemption, we approach G-d with a joint appeal, partially based on His mercy but also based on our merit. In the Pesach epic, before the actual redemption, G-d issues a command to Moshe Rabeinu - He tells him to present two actions, two mitzvot for our ancestors to perform before they can be freed from Egypt. One mitzvah is an old one that has been neglected, while the second one is completely new. These are: the Korban Pesach, with its subsequent smearing of the lamb's blood on the doorposts of the Jewish homes. The second is to have all non-circumcised Jewish males undergo Brit Milah. By performing these two blood-related mitzvot, the Jews would then become worthy of redemption. This concept provided G-d with the rationale to free the Jews. This was truly a combination of G-d's kindness and Jewish merit. We recall this factor at every Brit Milah, with the resounding shouts of "Bi-damayich Chayee! Bi-damayich Chayee!" (With your blood you were given life).

In our present day situation, I would like to entertain the proposition that our brothers and sisters in Israel are worthy of G-d's kindness and in turn can be the vehicles for bringing about an international redemption of our people. They have answered the ancient call of "Bi-damayich Chayee". They have been called on to offer their lives, their blood in two manners. Innocent civilians have been the victims of anti-semitic terrorism, they have

been slaughtered on the altars of Islamic radicalism. Likewise, our heroic Tzahal soldiers have suffered many casualties in their efforts to protect our people and to stem the tide of murder and insane hatred. Both civilians and military have distinguished themselves for their devotion to our people and to our land. This too is Bi-damayich Chayee! My true hope is that their sacrifices and bravery will prove the crucial factor in bringing about a Divine Redemption! Since we have the "Kos shel Eliyahu" at the Pesach seder, I would pray that the P'sak re: the coming of the Mashiach should follow the position of Reb Yehoshua. Therefore, let us hope that we proudly usher in the modern Messianic period this year, during this Pesach period.

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From: Menachem Leibtag [tsc@bezeqint.net] Subject: [Par-reg]METZORA - shiur  
RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG  
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Rabbi Abraham Leibtag Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag  
for PARSHIOT TAZRIA/METZORA [& KI-TEYZE]

There are two psukim in Parshat Ki-teyze that relate to the laws of "tzaraat" [leprosy] - the primary topic of Parshiot Tazria/Metzora. In the following shiur, we study the controversy among the commentators in regard to those psukim, as they relate to the underlying reason for "tzaraat".  
INTRODUCTION Although most of the laws in Parshat Ki-Teyze deal with "mitzvot bein adam l'chaveiro" [man and his fellow man], one exception calls our attention: the warning to observe the laws of "tzaraat" [leprosy] - a law that seems to involve only "bein adam la'Makom" [matters between man and G-d]. Let's begin our shiur by taking a careful look at this pasuk: "Be very careful with regard to [the laws concerning] a "nega tzaraat" (a type of skin infection) - do exactly as the levitical priests instruct you." (24:8)

At first glance, this pasuk doesn't appear to teach us anything new. Insead, it merely reminds us to adhere to the laws of "tzaraat," which have already been detailed (at length) in Sefer Vayikra. To complicate matters, this pasuk also deviates from the norm established that Sefer Devarim rarely discusses laws from the first half of Sefer Vayikra (chapters 1->17), and certainly not the laws concerning the MIKDASH or ritual cleanliness ("tumah v'tahara"). Therefore, when studying this pasuk, we must seriously consider these three issues: 1) Why do we find here a mitzvah "bein adam la'Makom"? [In other words, how does this law fit into the general theme and overall pattern of Parshat Ki-Teitzei?] 2) What specific law is being added that has not already appeared in Sefer Vayikra? And if no new law is added, then why is the subject of "tzaraat" raised in the first place? 3) Why does Sefer Devarim introduce, uncharacteristically, a law from the first half of Sefer Vayikra?

The classic answer to these questions is inferred from the pasuk immediately following ours: "Remember what G-d did to Miriam, on your journey when you left the land of Egypt." (24:9)

This pasuk clearly refers to the incident recorded in Parshat B'haalotcha, when Miriam contracts "tzaraat" following her complaints regarding Moshe's marriage to an "isha kushit" (see Bamidbar 12:1-16). This juxtaposition of the commandment to REMEMBER how Miriam was punished with "tzaraat" for speaking "lashon ha'ra" [evil talk] against her brother words, immediately after the warning to keep the laws of "tzaraat," leads us to an obvious conclusion. By reminding us not to speak "lashon ha'ra" immediately after the warning concerning the laws of "tzaraat," the Torah seems to enlist the laws of "tzaraat" as a (polite) reminder not to speak "lashon ha'ra"!

Essentially, the above explanation forms the basis of Rashi's commentary on this pasuk: ["REMEMBER WHAT GOD DID TO MIRIAM" (24:9):] "If one wants to be careful not to contract TZARAAT at all - then DON'T speak LASHON HA'RA [in the first place]. Remember what happened to Miriam when she spoke against her brother..." (see Rashi).

Not only does this interpretation reveal the underlying significance of these laws, it also answers the questions raised earlier. The laws of "tzaraat" are mentioned in Parshat Ki-Teitzei specifically because they in fact DO relate to "bein adam l'chaveiro"! It also explains why the pasuk

here includes only a very GENERAL warning concerning "tzaraat": there is no need to repeat its technical details, as they have already been discussed in Sefer Vayikra. [It is worthwhile to note in this context Ibn Ezra's comments on this pasuk, as well: "From here (this pasuk) we find support for the MIDRASH (of Vayikra Rabba 16:1): don't read 'M'TZO'RA' - rather 'MoTZi shem RA'" (a cute abbreviation). In other words, Ibn Ezra (a big 'fan' of pshat) finds support for the MIDRASH in Sefer Vayikra concerning the laws of METZORA based on the PSHAT of the psukim in Sefer Devarim!]

**NOT SO FAST** Despite the simplicity and beauty of this interpretation, several serious questions emerge. First of all, why doesn't the Torah just tell us "don't speak lashon ha'ra"? What is gained by merely inferring this conclusion from the story of Miriam and the laws of "tzaraat"? Furthermore, does it make sense for the Torah to recall a 'bad story' concerning Miriam in order to teach us not to tell 'bad stories' about other people?! Finally, why does the Torah emphasize (in 24:8) that we must follow the procedures specifically in accordance with the KOHANIM's instructions? If the message is simply not to speak "lashon ha'rah", the first half of the pasuk would have sufficed as ample warning. Due to these difficulties, several classic commentators explain these two psukim in a radically different manner. We will paraphrase the interpretations of Rashi, Rashbam, Chizkuni, and Ramban (in the order of our above questions), but I highly recommend that you first study (or at least read) those commentaries on your own before continuing.

**DON'T BE YOUR OWN DOCTOR!** Let's begin with the 'simple' question: If 24:8 simply serves as a general warning to follow the proper procedures regarding "tzaraat" (as we concluded above), then it would have sufficed to say, "Be careful to keep the laws of TZARAAT." What are we to learn from the second clause: "follow exactly what the levitical priests instruct you" (see 24:8)? Based on this redundancy, the Gemara in Makkot (22b) concludes that this pasuk includes MORE than just a general warning; rather it teaches us an additional law. Rashi cites that Gemara's explanation that this pasuk forbids an individual to surgically remove a "tzaraat" infection from his skin before showing it to the Kohen. Basically, according to this interpretation, this pasuk teaches us that one 'cannot be his own doctor' with regard to "tzaraat." Instead, he must show his infection to the KOHEN (priest) and obediently follow the kohen's 'diagnosis.' Here we find a classic example of MIDRASH HALACHA. Chazal derive an additional halacha (which does not appear explicitly in the text) from an 'extra' phrase in a pasuk, based on the content and context of the otherwise superfluous expression. [It is important to note that this Midrash Halacha does not contradict our earlier conclusion concerning the connection between "tzaraat" and "lashon ha'ra"; it simply adds an additional law. Note that Rashi brings down both peirushim! See also Further Iyun section.]

Let's continue now with our 'big' question: what does the Torah GAIN by recalling the incident with Miriam? Would it not have been more effective to simply admonish in straightforward fashion: 'Don't speak lashon ha'ra'? Rashbam and Chizkuni's interpretation to 24:8-9 provides a very different and interesting approach to this question.

**NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW!** In contrast to the approach of Rashi & Ibn Ezra (and our original explanation), that the primary purpose of these psukim is to prohibit "lashon ha'ra," Rashbam points us in a totally different direction. Let's take a look: "BE CAREFUL TO KEEP THE LAWS OF TZARAAT: [This comes to teach us that] even with regard to [an IMPORTANT PERSON] like King Uziyahu - do not honor him (should he become a metzora/ see Divrei Hayamim II 26:11-22). Instead, send him outside the camp [as Miriam was sent]... for remember what happened to Miriam: EVEN THOUGH she was a prophetess and Moshe's sister, they did not honor her; instead, they sent her outside the camp..." (Rashbam 24:8-9).

According to Rashbam, the primary focus of these psukim relates to the laws of "tzaraat", NOT "lashon ha'ra". Note that this interpretation resolves almost all our questions (raised above). Although the technical details of "tzaraat" have already been recorded in Sefer Vayikra, Sefer Devarim (in its discussion of various laws concerning daily life in the community of Israel) commands us NOT to make any exceptions for special people - i.e. NO "PROTEKTZIA"! Hence, the Torah mentions the case of Miriam to emphasize precisely this point of 'no exceptions' (with regard to tzaraat). We cannot, therefore, according to Rashbam, infer from these psukim a definite connection between "tzaraat" and "lashon ha'ra." [The story of Miriam provides only 'circumstantial' evidence for such a connection.

Recall that the Torah never states explicitly that "lashon ha'ra" is the cause of tzaraat! In fact, most other occurrences of tzaraat in Tanach involve the problem of "ga'ava" [arrogance] - e.g. the cases of Uziyahu (Divrei Hayamim II 26:16-20) and Naaman (Melachim II chapter 5). See also Shmot 4:6-8, "v'akmal.]"

Rashbam is not alone in his approach. Chizkuni (on 24:8-9) explains these psukim in a similar fashion: "KEEP THE LAWS OF TZARAAT: Do not grant special honor to important people by exempting them from banishment from the camp. Remember what G-d did to Miriam - even though she was sister to the king and high priest, she was nevertheless banished outside the camp for the entire seven-day period."

The controversy surrounding this pasuk serves as a classic example of differing exegetical approaches. Rashi will usually prefer a Midrashic explanation that helps resolve a problem in pshat and bears an educational message. Rashbam, on the other hand, will usually adopt an interpretation which accommodates the minute details in the 'pshat' of the psukim. [Interestingly, in this instance Ibn Ezra, who usually prefers "pshat" over "drash," concedes that what appears as only "drash" in Sefer Vayikra emerges as "pshat" from the juxtaposition of these two psukim in Sefer Devarim.]

How about Ramban? We've intentionally saved him for last, because his approach (as usual) is the most comprehensive, addressing textual and thematic parallels to other parshiyot in Chumash. We will show how his approach (in this case) is both 'educational' like Rashi's and faithful to "pshat" no less than Rashbam's. [Incidentally, this is why most pieces of the Ramban's commentary are much longer and more complex than those of Rashi and Rashbam. On the other hand, specifically because of his brevity and conciseness, Rashi has earned more widespread popularity.]

**REMEMBER THE OTHER "ZACHOR'S"!** Ramban begins by quoting Rashi's explanation that guarding one's tongue against lashon hara prevents the onset of "tzaraat." Ramban doesn't disagree with Rashi; rather, he demonstrates that what Rashi considers "drash" may actually be "pshat." Let's see this Ramban inside: "[Ramban quotes Rashi, then adds...] In my opinion this [pasuk 24:9] should be considered a POSITIVE COMMANDMENT - [i.e. it should be counted as] an actual MITZVAT ASEIH!"

In other words, the Ramban considers the recounting of the incident involving Miriam's "tzaraat" one of the 613 mitzvot! How does Ramban reach such a daring conclusion? Ramban's approach results from his 'sensitive ear' to the Torah's use of key phrases. When Ramban hears the opening phrase: "ZACHOR et asher asah Hashem..." he is immediately reminded of three other instances where the Torah introduces a mitzvah with a similar expression: 1) SHABBAT - "ZACHOR et yom ha'shabbat" (Shmot 20:7) 2) YETZIAT MITZRAYIM - "ZACHOR et ha'yom..." (Shmot 13:3) 3) AMALEK - "ZACHOR et asher asa lecha Amalek..." (Devarim 25:17)

Ramban cites these three examples as proof that a pasuk beginning with "ZACHOR..." constitutes a positive commandment (a "mitzvat aseih"); and hence, our case should be no different. But what is this mitzvah? Why would the Torah have us remember a 'not so nice' story about Miriam? Like an artist, Ramban beautifully 'puts all the pieces together,' explaining this seemingly enigmatic pasuk in light of our earlier questions. Like Rashi and Ibn Ezra, he points to "lashon hara" as the central topic of these psukim. This is why the incident of Miriam is introduced and why the issue of "tzaraat" is mentioned altogether in Parshat Ki-Teitzei, in the context of mitzvot "bein adam l'chaveiro." However, Ramban's interpretation also explains the advantage of employing Miriam to present this mitzvah (rather than stating it explicitly): "... Hence, this is a warning (of the Torah) not to speak LASHON HA'RA, commanding us to REMEMBER the terrible punishment that Miriam received [even though she was] a righteous prophetess, and she spoke only about her brother (not someone outside the family) and only PRIVATELY with her brother (Aharon), not in public, so that Moshe himself would not be embarrassed... But DESPITE THESE GOOD INTENTIONS, she was punished. How much more so must we be careful never to speak LASHON HA'RA... (see Ramban 24:9).

Thus, according to Ramban, the Torah doesn't mention Miriam to tell us how bad her sin was. To the contrary, the incident of Miriam (who, as everyone knows, was righteous and had only good intentions) emphasizes how CAREFUL we must all be in all matters which may involve even the

slightest degree of LASHON HA'RA. This pasuk reminds us that punishment was administered EVEN in the case of Miriam's mild "lashon hara." Based on the parallel to other instances of the word "zachor," the Ramban concludes that mere recollection does not suffice. We are obligated to verbally recount this unfortunate incident every day [just as "kiddush" on Shabbat fulfills the obligation of "zachor et yom ha'shabbat l'kadsho..."]! Ramban understands these psukim as not merely some good advice, but as a commandment to retell this incident on a daily basis. [See also Sifra on Vayikra 26:14 [Torat Kohanim Bechukotei Alef 2->3]. This probably explains the "minhag" [custom] of reciting this pasuk each day after shacharit - see the six "zchirot" at the conclusion of shacharit in your siddur!]

Ramban's closing remarks are most significant, as they reflect another important aspect of his exegetical approach: "For how could it be that LASHON HA'RA - which is equivalent in its severity to murder - would not be considered a [full fledged] MITZVAH in the Torah! ... Rather, this pasuk serves as a serious warning to refrain [from LASHON HA'RA], be it in public or in private, intentional or unintentional...and it should be considered one of the 613 MITZVOT..." (Ramban 24:9).

Ramban here employs 'conceptual logic' - the essence of a "pshat" approach - to support his comprehensive interpretation of these psukim. Ramban thus utilizes a wider perspective of "pshat" to reach a conclusion not only similar to the Midrash, but also more poignant. [If you would like to see an 'enhanced version' of Ramban's explanation of this mitzvah, read his commentary to Ramban's SEFER HA'MITZVOT. At the conclusion of the "mitzvot aseih" section, Ramban adds several mitzvot which (in his opinion) Ramban had overlooked. In "hasaga" #9, Ramban adds this mitzvah, that we must constantly remind ourselves of the incident of Miriam in order to remember not to speak LASHON HA'RA.]

Note as well that according to Ramban's interpretation, the mitzvah which emerges from these two psukim in Parshat Ki- Teitzei is not only yet another "mitzvah bein adam l'chaveiro", it also forms one of the most basic 'building block' towards achieving the ultimate goal of Sefer Devarim. Recall how the mitzvot of the main speech form the guidelines for the establishment of G-d's model nation in the land of Israel. Imagine an entire nation, where each individual reminded himself daily of these stringent guidelines concerning "lashon ha'ra"! Anyone who would like to be "machmir," especially on the "d'oraya" level, is invited to take upon himself this "chumra" explicated by Ramban.

shabbat shalom,  
menachem

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From: Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org] To: KBY parsha  
Subject: Shabbat Hagadol

SHABBAT HAGADOL THE SERVICE OF HASHEM  
RAV ZECHARIAH TUBI SHLITA

The common practice on Shabbat Hagadol is to read the Haftorah from Malachi ch. 3, "Then the offering of Yehuda and Yerushalayim will be pleasing to Hashem as in the days of old and in previous years." (Malachi 3:4) Yet, other than the concluding verses, "Behold, I send to you Eliya the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of Hashem" (3:23) - which some say is the reason for the name "Shabbat Hagadol" - there is no connection between the Haftorah and this Shabbat, which precedes Pesach. It would have been proper to read something relating to Pesach or the Exodus from Egypt, whereas reflection on the verses of the Haftorah, "I will draw near to you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness..." (Malachi 3:5), shows that whole idea of the Haftorah is the awesome Day of Judgment.

Furthermore, the Brisker Rav asks a number of questions regarding verses in the Haftorah:

1. "Bring all the tithes into the storage house, and let it be sustenance in My Temple. Test Me, if you will, with this, says Hashem, Master of Legions, [see] if I do not open up for you the windows of the heavens and pour out upon you blessing without end" (3:10) - Why does the pasuk link the giving of the tithes to receiving blessing, "Test Me, if you will..." since giving tithes is a positive commandment from the Torah, and we are obligated to fulfill it without connection to receiving reward?

2. "Your words have become harsh against Me, says Hashem; but you say, 'How have we spoken against You?' You have said, 'It is for naught to serve G-d! What gain is there for us that we have kept His watch, and that we walk submissively before Hashem, Master of Legions?'" (3:13-14) - This is extremely difficult. If they said, "It is for naught to serve G-d," this is absolute denial, G-d forbid, so how do they claim, "How have we spoken against You?"

3. "They will be a precious treasure for Me, says Hashem, Master of Legions, on the day which I bring about; and I will have mercy on them as a man has mercy on his son who serves him." (3:17) - What is the addition of the words, "who serves him?" It would have been sufficient to say, "as a man has mercy on his son," as it says, "As a father is merciful towards his children." (Tehillim 103:13)?

The Brisker Rav explains as follows. The Gemara (Brachot 35b) says: "Come and see that the later generations are not like the earlier generations. The earlier generations would bring their produce into the house through the door in order to obligate it in tithes; the later generations would bring their produce through the roof ... in order to exempt it from tithes."

The fact is, one who brings his fruit through the roof is, in truth, exempt from tithes, so what is the claim against the later generation? They thought that service of G-d means that a person must do only what is incumbent upon him. However, if there is financial expenditure, and a person can exempt himself from the mitzvah - there is no problem. Just the opposite; let him not lose his money and let him be exempt from the mitzvah. This is their mistake, since the true servant of Hashem is one who does out of love and seeks to fulfill as many mitzvot as possible, not to evade the fulfillment of mitzvot. This is what G-d tells them, "Test me..." If you work harder in fulfilling Hashem's will and His mitzvot by fulfilling the mitzvah of tithes, and you bring the produce in through the door and fulfill the mitzvah - "I will ... pour upon you blessing without end." This is what our Sages comment, "Gives tithes - so that you should become wealthy." (Ta'anit 9a)

This also answers the second question: "You have said, 'It is for naught to serve G-d.'" They did not mean to say that the service of G-d is pointless, but rather that only the service of G-d which is "for free" (lashav) must be fulfilled, but when there is financial loss, there is need to find a means whereby to be exempt from the mitzvah. This is what they said, "What gain is there for us that we have kept His watch." Why should we spend money in order to observe mitzvot if it is possible to be exempt from the mitzvah (as with the mitzvah of tithes)? Therefore, G-d requests of them, "Bring all the tithes into the storage house." Be like the earlier generations, increase the service of G-d, and do not seek means to be exempt from it. G-d promises them that then, "I will have mercy on them as a man has mercy on his son who serves him" - not like the regular compassion that is inherent in a father towards his son, but rather like the mercy on a son who serves him, who tries to serve Hashem more. He is not only a son who fulfills what is incumbent upon him, but rather one who seeks ways to serve G-d more.

This is the conclusion of the Haftorah, "Remember the Torah of Moshe My servant." (3:22) The true servant of Hashem was Moshe Rabbeinu, who submitted himself completely to G-d. So, too, each Jew must behave in this way, to be a servant of Hashem. This is our preparation before the holiday of Pesach, which is the festival when we left slavery to freedom. We must bear in mind, however, that the true freedom is, "When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain" (Shemot 3:12) - since, "The servant of Hashem - he alone is free" (R. Yehuda Halevi), and, "The only free person is one who is involved in Torah." (Pirkei Avot 6:2) Pesach Kasher V'Sameach

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