

BS"D

To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com  
From: crshulman@aol.com

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TAZRIA - 5763

To receive this parsha sheet in Word and/or Text format, send a blank e-mail to [parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join> Please also copy me at [crshulman@aol.com](mailto:crshulman@aol.com) For old parsha sheets see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/messages> For Torah links see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/links>

---

From: [torahweb@zeus.host4u.net](mailto:torahweb@zeus.host4u.net) Sent April 03, 2003 To: [weekly1@torahweb.org](mailto:weekly1@torahweb.org) Subject: Rabbi Herschel Schachter - On the Matter of Masorah  
to subscribe, email [weekly@torahweb.org](mailto:weekly@torahweb.org) to unsubscribe or for anything else, email: [torahweb@torahweb.org](mailto:torahweb@torahweb.org) the HTML version of this dvar Torah can be found at: <http://www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html>

### RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER ON THE MATTER OF MASORAH

The Torah does provide simanim to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher birds. Rather, a list of non-kosher fowl is given, and one must act according to masorah (tradition) in determining whether the fowl he is eating is not among those on the non-kosher list. Regarding fish, no masorah is required at all, one need only check to see if that particular fish has fins and scales. With respect to eating animals, the Torah makes their kosher status dependent on two simanim: mafris parsah (having split hooves) and maalah gerah (the chewing of the cud). The Shach in his commentary to Yoreh Deah (80:1) mentions (in connection with eating a kosher beheima) that a masorah is needed. The simple meaning of the Shach is that to distinguish between a beheima and a chaya a masorah is necessary. Cheilev of a chaya may be eaten, as opposed to cheilev of a beheima, which is prohibited. Although the Talmud gives simanim to determine whether any given animal is a beheima or a chaya, the Shach recorded a chumrah, that a masorah is needed. The Chazon Ish (Y.D. end of siman 11) points out that the Chochmas Adam (36:1) understood the Shach to have said that not only is it necessary for a masorah to identify any animal as a chaya (as opposed to a beheima), but even to allow one to eat any given animal the minhag requires a masorah, over and above the Biblical need for being ma'aleh geira and mafris parsah.

In general, masorah plays a most important role in establishing the halacha. Rambam writes that in his opinion, we ought to not simply establish every seventh year as a shemittah year, but rather must have fifty-year cycles, with the 7th, 14th, 21st, etc. years observed as shemittah, and the fiftieth year being blank. (The special mitzvos of yoveil, the fiftieth year, only apply when the majority of the world Jewish population is located in Eretz Yisrael). However, the Rambam (Hilchos Shemittah V'Yovel, 10:5) continues to say, that the Geonim who lived in Eretz Yisrael and observed the laws of shemittah, clearly followed the practice of simply observing every seventh year as shemittah, and did not leave the fiftieth year blank. Although Rambam thought that this does not make any sense, he said that this practice should nonetheless be followed because masorah is most crucial in determining what the halacha should be. We ought to assume that there certainly must be some good explanation for this

practice, even though Rambam thought it did not make any sense at all. (After many generations and much thought, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik gave a most reasonable explanation for this view of the Geonim, which indeed has clearly been the practice for many centuries.)

In a teshuva written by the Ran he raised an interesting suggestion. The mishna tells us that a megillah written in languages other than Hebrew may be used for the purpose of fulfilling the obligation of mikrah megillah on Purim. The majority of the audience who listen to the megillah in every shul do not really understand the original Hebrew. Wouldn't it make better sense to have a kosher megillah written on parchment in the vernacular, so that everyone would be able to understand? To this the Ran points out that already in the days of the Talmud it was the case that many of the listeners did not understand the original Hebrew text of the megillah, and nevertheless the minhag for so many centuries has always been to read from a Hebrew text. This idea of writing a megillah in translation could have been implemented centuries ago, but never was. We ought to assume that there must be a good halachic reason why this was never done. (And indeed, the Shulchan Aruch quotes the idea that a megillah written in two different languages may not be kosher. Rambam had a reading in a tosefta in Gittin that a get written in two different languages is not kosher; there is no flow and no continuity from one language to the other. Similarly in the megillah, since we really do not know how to accurately translate, "Ho'achashteranim benei horamachim", our megillah would be partly in English and partly in Persian, and this would not flow.) The Talmud (Menachos 32b) discusses exactly what type of a shoe must be used for the performance of the mitzvah of chalitzah. In conclusion the Talmud states that our practice for centuries has been to allow "a sandal", so therefore, even if Eliyahu Hanavi should appear and tell us not to use a sandal, we would not listen to him on this matter. The centuries-old practice has established the halacha in an irreversible manner.

Years ago, a prominent rabbi in Eretz Yisrael came up with an original idea as to how to permit Kohanim to go to medical school (i.e., to come in contact with meisim (corpses)). Rav Moshe Feinstein published a teshuva pointing out that this rabbi's suggestion could have been implemented centuries ago, but never was. Therefore we must assume that there must be some good explanation as to why the suggestion is not correct. (Indeed, in my sefer - B'Ikvei HaTzon - I have published what I consider quite a reasonable rebuttal.) And even if Eliyahu Hanavi were to appear and express his opinion in favor of this rabbi's notion, Rav Moshe thinks we would not even follow him on this matter (Igros Moshe, Y.D. 3:155). A matter of halacha which has been accepted for centuries can not be overturned, unless one can demonstrate that there simply was an error involved from the very outset.

Now we know that the halacha was always very flexible. The Maseches Sofrim (16:5) writes that this is precisely why the Torah Shebaal Peh was not written down, so that nothing should be "etched in stone". The mishna often records the mishna achrona (the later tana'im) as reversing the pesakim of the mishna rishona (the earlier tana'im). Anyone familiar with the Mishna Berurah knows that the Chafetz Chaim has reversed many accepted pesakim of the Shulchan Aruch! "This is the way of the Torah." This itself is an integral part of the masorah, that there should always be room for chiddush!

The Talmud relates that for years it was assumed that all of the Beit Shean area was endowed with kedushas ha'aretz, and fruits grown there are tevel and must be tithed. After many years, Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi reversed this accepted practice, after

ascertaining that certain parts of that area were never endowed with kedusha when Ezra and Nechemia returned to build the bayis sheni. The prevalent practice was simply based on an error. The Talmud adds as a footnote, that the moral of this story is that when a rabbi comes to reverse a time-honored practice, we ought not always reject it out of hand, but should always consider the possibility of a chiddush in halacha (Chullin 6b).

Nevertheless, we still assume that a centuries-old halachic position, accepted and observed universally by all of Klal Yisroel, does not lend itself to reversal. The tradition makes room for, and even encourages, chiddush, but not for shinui (see Nefesh Harav pg. 64). According to Rambam, the binding force of the Talmud is precisely due to the fact that it was universally accepted by all of Klal Yisroel.

The Tosefta (Megillah Chap. 3) records that theoretically, a woman should be permitted to get an aliyah (to the Torah), however the Rabbis did not allow this because of kvod hatzibbur. This has clearly been the universal practice in Klal Yisroel for close to two thousand years.

G-d has created all men b'tselem elokim (in the image of G-d) with all of the divine attributes innately contained within their souls, and has commanded us "v'holachto b'drachav" ("you shall walk in His ways") to preserve and maintain all of those divine middos (character traits). We are also told that we ought to serve as an ohr lagoyim (as a light unto the nations) (see Yeshaya 42:6.) "And when the other people of the world will see that we have succeeded in maintaining our tselem elokim, they will learn from us to be G-d fearing" (Devarim 28:10), i.e., they will realize that they also have it within their power to maintain that b'tselem elokim that they were endowed with.

Part of our obligation of v'holachto b'drachav, to imitate G-d, i.e. to preserve and maintain those divine attributes that were implanted within us, requires of us to lead private lives; not to be seeking the limelight; not to be loud in speech, in dress, or in action. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is described by the Navi Yehsaya as a "kel mistater". He hides from man (see Nefesh Harav pg. 281).

This concept is what is called tsnius; to lead a life of tsin'a - as opposed to a life of farhesia (public). Sometimes the Torah requires of us to compromise on our tsnius and to do things in a public fashion. We need a government; we need kohanim sacrificing korbanot in the Beis Hamikdosh; we must have tefilla b'tsibbur. Even when we are required to compromise on our middas hatsnius (privacy) and enter the public eye, the hala cha tells us that som tasim alecha melech - melech v'lo malka, that women should always try to maintain their privacy. Let the men run the government. Let the men offer the korbanot in the Temple. Let the men serve as chazzan for the public prayer, and let the men read from the Torah in public. If we simply do not have any other choice, we would call upon women to run the government and read from the Torah. But if a woman were to run the government or read from the Torah, this would indicate that we had no choice in the matter, that from all of the men present we were unable to get enough of them to take care of these activities. This creates a problem of kavod hatzibbur.

The motivation to allow women to get aliyot is not because we don't have enough men to do the job. Some women are looking for empowerment. Receiving an aliyah which was traditionally viewed as an act of compromising on one's privacy, has been looked upon by the amei ha'aretz as an act of empowerment. Pushy individuals try to "grab the omud" and "grab maffir" whenever possible. This attitude is in outright violation of the entire principle of tsnius. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is a Kel Mistater, and always tries to be maalim Himself. Why should we even

consider giving someone an aliyah for the sake of empowering that individual if this attitude is totally contradictory to our whole outlook on life?

Rebbe, who reversed the accepted position on Beit Shean, was known as an extremely humble individual. The Talmud (Sotah 49a) states that when Rebbe passed away, humility disappeared from the world! When such a humble individual comes up with an original chidush, we have to consider it seriously. Humility is always very crucial with respect to determining psak halacha. (The Talmud (Eruvin 13b) tells us that the halacha was generally accepted like Beis Hillel as opposed to Beis Shammai because Beis Hillel were more humble.) How much more so when one wants to be mechadeish to reverse an accepted position, we must be sure that the author of the original idea is not formulating his chidush shelo lishma - just to gain popularity or for some other ulterior motive. Although it is permissible, and even encouraged, for one to learn shelo lishma, for one to be mechadeish shelo lishma is not allowed (see pg. 26 in B'Ikvei Hatson).

Rav Moshe in his essay on the topic of the kohanim attending medical school writes that the fact that some "scholar," not particularly known for his strength in psak, published a paper in which he was prepared to permit a centuries-honored prohibition universally accepted by Klal Yisroel, would itself seem to indicate that the author of the paper probably belonged to that group of individuals who are gaas libam b'hora'ah (arrogantly enjoy deciding questions of Jewish law). To be mechadeish, one must have an extra degree of humility like Rebbe!

The Talmud records several disputes between the Tzedukim and the Rabbis. One of them was with respect to inheritance (Bava Basra 115b). The Tzedukim were apparently bothered with the fact that the Torah discriminated against women regarding the laws of yerusha (inheritance), and they attempted to "rectify" this "injustice" somewhat. In later years the early Christians adopted several of the positions of the earlier Tzedukim. The Talmud (Shabbos 116b. See Shaylos V'Teshuvos Tsafnas Paneach #313) records that the early Christians divided yerushos (inheritances) equally between sons and daughters. Several centuries later, the Reform movement continued with this complaint against the tradition, that the rabbis were discriminating unfairly against women by having them sit separately in the synagogue, etc. This complaint has developed historically to become the symbol of rebellion against our masorah. The fact that this symbolizes harisus hadas (destruction of the religion), causes it to become a prohibited activity (See Nefesh Harav pg.233 with respect to driving to synagogue on Shabbos). Rabbi Akiva lived at a time when many were attacking the Jewish religion. The Talmud records that rather than be apologetic about various Torah laws that didn't seem that reasonable in his generation, and rather than look for legal loopholes to get around those particular laws, (as some of our generation have suggested that "when there is a rabbinic will there is a halachic way"), he would rather take a different route. He would insist on the most stringent observance of b'dafka (specifically) those halachot which the "modern Jew" (of his day) felt most uncomfortable with, to prevent the religion from falling on the slippery slope (see Divrei Hashkafa p.72). Rav Soloveitchik zt"l wrote (Divrei Hashkafa p.233) that this indeed has been the traditional response of our rabbanim throughout the ages.

---

<http://www.tzemachdavid.org/thepracticaltorah/tazria.shtml>  
THE PRACTICAL TORAH

BY RABBI MICHAEL TAUBES

Parshas Tazria:

PRAYING FOR THE SICK

No definitive Halacha LeMa'aseh conclusions should be applied to practical situations based on any of these Shiurim.

The Torah tells us that a person who has contracted Tzora'as is required to publicly announce the fact that he has become Temei, ritually impure (VaYikra 13:45) The Gemara in Moed Kattan (5a) explains that this is done for two purposes: first, so that other people will know to keep away from this person so as not to become Temei themselves, and second, so that the public, upon becoming aware of this person's plight, will pray to Hashem for mercy on his behalf. The Gemara in Sotah (32b) extends this last idea by stating that whenever a person has a serious problem, he should inform the public so that they will request mercy for him. It appears from the context of a similar passage in the Gemara in Shabbos (67a) that whenever anyone or anything is in anguish, it is beneficial to have other people pray for mercy in his behalf. The rationale for this would seem to be the idea expressed by the Gemara in Berachos (8a) that when a group of people, constituting a Tzibbur, davens to Hashem, the moment becomes an Eis Ratzon, a propitious time for Hashem to hear the prayers. Indeed, the Midrash in Devarim Rabbah (Parsha 2 Siman 7) states that the Tefillos of a Tzibbur will never "come up empty," an idea echoed by the Rambam (Hilchos Tefillah 8:1) who says that the Tefillos of a Tzibbur are always heard. Based on all of the above, apparently, the Minhag has developed that the Tzibbur recites special Tefillos, particularly Tehillim, on behalf of someone who is ill. It should be pointed out that the idea of reciting Tehillim for protection from trouble and harm is actually recorded by the Rambam (Hilchos Avodas Kochavim 11:12). The Gesher HaChaim (Chelek 1 Perek 1 Siman 3) outlines certain specific prayers which have become customary to recite for a Choleh, a person who is ill.

The Gemara in Avodah Zarah (8a) discusses various personal requests that may be added to one's Shemoneh Esrei, and states that one who has a sick person to pray for should request mercy for him in the Beracha of "Refaeinu". The Rambam (Hilchos Tefillah 6:3) and the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 119:1) rule accordingly. In keeping with this notion that one should somehow connect to a Tzibbur when praying for the sick, the Gemara in Shabbos (12b) states that when one davens for one sick person, he should ask that this person receive Hashem's mercy together with all of the other sick Jewish people. Rashi (Ibid. s.v. B'soch) explains that by relating this sick person to others, one's prayers will be accepted in the merit of the many people now included. The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 335:6) accepts this view (See Ibid. Shach Sif Katan 4). The Ramo (Ibid. Sif 10) notes that the Minhag is to recite a special Beracha in Shul on behalf of a sick person; this is the basis for the Mi Shebeirach which we say for the Cholim when the Torah is out, and to which the Tzibbur responds by saying Amen. It is interesting to note that at one time, the Minhag was to recite this Mi Shebeirach after Yishtabach before Borechu, as cited by the Ramo elsewhere (Orach Chaim 54:3). In his commentary to the Tur entitled Darkei Moshe (Yoreh Deah Ibid. Os 2), the Ramo adds that it is proper to give Tzedakah for the benefit of the sick person because along with Teshuvah and Tefillah, Tzedakah can annul any bad decree. Our practice today is to announce the Tzedakah pledge as part of the text of the Mi Shebeirach.

The Yerushalmi in Shabbos (Perek 15 Halachah 3, 78b) states that it is forbidden to make requests for one's personal needs on Shabbos. The Korban HaEidah there (Ibid. s.v. Asur) explains that this is because part of the idea of Oneg Shabbos is that one

should feel that all his needs are taken care of; one who davens for these needs displays the opposite feelings and causes himself to worry. Can one, then, daven for a sick person on Shabbos? The Tosefta in Shabbos (Perek 17 Halachah 14) quotes that Beis Shammai forbid it while Beis Hillel allow it. The Ramo (Orach Chaim 288:10) rules that one may recite a Beracha on Shabbos for a Choleh who is dangerously ill that day. This is not, however, agreed upon by everybody, as the Taz (Ibid. Sif Katan 5) and others point out by quoting those who disallow any Beracha for a Choleh on Shabbos. The Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Ibid. Sif 9 and in Kuntres Acharon Os 2) distinguishes between a Tzibbur who should not daven on Shabbos for a Choleh who is not dangerously ill at that moment, and an individual who may do so. Rav Yaakov Emden (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Sheilas Yaabetz Chelek 1 Siman 64), concurs with the ruling that one may pray on Shabbos for a sick person who is dangerously ill that day, but strongly objects to the practice of reciting a Mi Shebeirach on Shabbos for one who is not that sick, stating that he would like to abolish this improper Minhag. He admits, however, that we don't have the power to prevent people from doing this since it is an old custom. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 1:105) writes that if the Choleh himself requests that prayers be recited in his behalf, one may comply even on Shabbos, even if he is not dangerously ill that day. The Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim Ibid. Sif Katan 14) also is puzzled by our practice to recite a Mi Shebeirach on Shabbos for a Choleh who is not in danger, and attempts to justify it. He adds, though, that in the text of this Mi Shebeirach, one should say the phrase "Shabbos He M'Lizok U'Refuah Keruvah Lavo" indicating that although Shabbos forbids us to really cry out and pray for this Choleh, a recovery should still come speedily. This is indeed our practice (See Mishnah Berurah Ibid. Sif Katan 28). It is worth noting that according to the Midrash in Bereishis Rabbah (Parshah 53 Siman 19), the sincere prayers of a Choleh on his own behalf are better than any others.

---

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: April 03, 2003 To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Tazria

"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Tazria - 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.

A Joyful Time Should Be Had By All

At the beginning of Parshas Tazria, the Torah says that after a woman gave birth to a male son she is ritually impure for seven days. Then, following immersion in a Mikveh, a ritual bath, she returns to a state of ritual purity. On the eighth day, male sons are circumcised. The Talmud [Niddah 31b] provides a very interesting reason for performing the milah [circumcision] on the eighth day. During the seven days of ritual impurity following the birth of the son, relations between husband and wife are prohibited. In early generations, prior to subsequent rabbinic prohibitions which exist today, husband and wife were allowed to be together and have relations by the eighth day.

The Talmud explains that the reason we wait until the eighth day for the bris milah and the accompanying celebration is that prior to this time, the happiness of the husband and wife would be limited by the prohibition against intimately sharing their joy together. The lack of ability by husband and wife to celebrate fully might even dampen the spirits and restrict the enjoyment of the other guests. Therefore the Torah established that milah be

'delayed' until the eighth day, so that everyone will be able to fully participate in the joyous occasion.

Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein (the Slobodka Rosh Yeshiva, zt"l), points out that the Torah is expressing tremendous sensitivity for people's feelings. This passage says, essentially, that milah should really be performed sooner. The Torah has us wait until the eighth day to make sure that everyone present at the Simcha [happy occasion] will be able to fully enjoy themselves.

The concept of sharing happy occasions and maximizing the Simcha for everyone present is so basic to Torah ethics that it justifies 'postponing' milah until the eighth day.

Four times a year, on Yom Kippur and the end of the three major festivals (Shemini Atzeres (following Sukkos), Pesach, and Shavuos), the Yizkor prayer is recited in memory of the dead.

There is a virtually universal custom that when Yizkor is said, those worshippers whose parents are both still living leave the sanctuary during the recital. What is the reason for this custom?

Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein wrote that the reason for the custom is the very thought mentioned earlier. Yizkor is usually recited on Yom Tov. If reciting Yizkor is not exactly a joyous experience for the people whose parents are deceased, it can at least be a comforting experience to remember their loved ones on Yom Tov. But if the other people witness this and watch friends and relatives perhaps shedding tears for departed parents, that would affect and contradict their enjoyment of the Yom Tov. This is what we are trying to avoid. We try to provide the appropriate form of Simchas Yom Tov [happiness on the holiday] for everyone.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA

DavidATwersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by David Hoffman; Baltimore dhoffman@torah.org

Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrاند, Copyright © 2003 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. [learn@torah.org](mailto:learn@torah.org)

[http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rhab\\_metsora.html](http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rhab_metsora.html)  
[TorahWeb from last year]

RABBI YAAKOV HABER

A CALL FROM THE INFINITE

A large part of our Parshiyos Tazria and Metzora addresses the phenomenon of tzara'as. Commentators note that, in contrast to the standard English translation of tzara'as as leprosy, in reality, this malady was a not a classic medical disease but rather a physical manifestation of a Divine punishment. Evidence to this approach includes the fact that the metzora (one afflicted with tzara'as) is only banned from walled cities (Mishna Keilim 1:7). In addition, the decision as to the status of the afflicted individual is totally in the hands of a religious figure, the kohein, not a physician, and until such time as the kohein declares him to be tamei, ritually impure, he remains tahor, pure, even if another expert in the laws of tzara'as finds him to exhibit all the requisite signs (see Rashi Tazria 13:2, s.v. "el Aharon"). If indeed tzara'as were a medical condition, then the metzora should be banned from all cities as a quarantine measure and should immediately be declared a leper by any qualified doctor, not a kohein.

One of the unique laws of tzara'as is that of "kulo hafach lavan tahor hu" (Tazria 13:13) -- if the entire body of the metzora turns white, even if the other signs of tzara'as manifest themselves, the individual is declared tahor. Medically, of course, this would be

irrational. However, even in light of the true Divine cause of the ailment, this halacha (law) seems difficult to understand. If the "disease" spreads to his entire body, shouldn't this indicate a greater manifestation of Divine wrath, and consequently shouldn't the one so afflicted be declared tamei with certainty?

R. Yisroel Meir HaKohen Kagan, known as the Chofetz Chayim based on his magnum opus on the laws concerning gossip and slander, proposes a possible explanation for this unique regulation. The Talmud Arachin (16b) comments that tzara'as is a punishment for a variety of sins including gossip, slander, and murder. The cause of all of these sins can be attributed to an inflated sense of self-importance. The gossip only thinks of the enjoyment he receives in transmitting disparaging information about others without regard to the possible harm that such talk might inflict upon the victims of his speech. The murderer clearly does not value the life of his victim as he does his own. The eventual isolation of the metzora, exiled from major population centers, serves to force the afflicted one to rethink his harmful attitude and realize his ultimate dependence on the very people whose lives he formerly did not value. It also encourages the necessary sense of humility and submission to G-d that is crucial for true penitence. Consequently, when the signs of tzara'as are not as pronounced, when the individual was not fully aware of the degree of Divine displeasure with his actions, perhaps even attributing his "disease" to some transient, medical condition, is it necessary for the isolation to be utilized as a constructive, punitive measure to bring about the desired penitent state. When the symptoms are so all-encompassing as to engulf his entire body, the metzora cannot help but be fully aware of the magnitude of his sin and therefore does not need expulsion from cities to bolster his t'shuva process. Often, the greatest degree of penitence comes when the sinner has fallen to such a nadir that he realizes that he cannot remain at that level lest he risk utter spiritual destruction.

R. Yitzchak Hutner z"l, the founding Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Chaim Berlin, in a letter to a student, explains a passage in Mishlei (24:16) in a similar vein. "Sheva yipol tzadik v'kam", "the righteous one falls seven times, yet gets up." This is generally interpreted to mean that even though the righteous individual stumbles often in his spiritual journey, he always rises again. R. Hutner suggests an alternative explanation. Because the tzadik fell seven times, he rose to even higher heights. Through realizing the spiritual bankruptcy of his moral failings, the righteous individual learns from his past errors and soars to greater levels of Divine service.

A similar idea appears in Masechet Sanhedrin (97b) in a dispute concerning the process of redemption. R. Eliezer maintains that ge'ula must be preceded by t'shuva, whereas R. Yehoshua posits that redemption can occur even without repentance. In the ensuing discussion, R. Yehoshua agrees that repentance is a necessary prerequisite for ge'ula, but he maintains that, absent repentance occurring out of a loving desire to return to G-d, Hashem will cause an evil leader to arise whose decrees are as harsh as Haman's, and, as a result, the Jewish people will repent. Apparently, although free will is preserved, desperate situations inevitably lead to submission to G-d, soul-searching and repentance. Just as the metzora whose entire body is plagued realizes the extent of his spiritual malaise even without enforced isolation, so too K'lal Yisrael, according to R. Yehoshua, after undergoing immense suffering, will also realize the cause of their hopeless situation and seek to better themselves, ultimately bringing about salvation.

The Rambam (Hilchot Ta'aniyot Chapter 1) directs us in times of Jewish tragedy to analyze our actions, emend our mistakes, and

increase our devotion to intense prayer and service of G-d. To do otherwise, to attribute the tragedy solely to historical circumstances, thus ignoring the Divine wake-up call, would be cruel to oneself and to the k'lal and might lead to greater suffering. In these troubling times for Jews the world over and especially in our Holy Land, let us daven to the true Ish Milchama (B'shalach 15:3) that our soldiers be successful in their battles against the evil forces who seek to inflict constant suffering on our nation. And let us attempt to bring about the necessary repentance which will assuredly lead to the end of all tribulations.

---

From: Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org] Sent: April 03, 2003 To: KBY parsha Subject: Parshat Tazria Parshat Tazria "IN ITS TIME I WILL HASTEN IT" Rosh Hayeshiva RAV MORDECHAI GREENBERG shlita "When a woman produces seed and gives birth to a male." (Vayikra 12:2) Chazal comment: "If the man produces seed first, [the woman] gives birth to a female; if the woman produces seed first, she gives birth to a male." (Brachot 60a) Many divergent explanations are offered as to the simple meaning of this statement. However, in the realm of drash, Chazal's words are associated to the notion of teshuva and geulah. The prophets compare the relationship between G-d and Israel to the relationship between a man and his beloved. There is an argument between them who should take initiative and appease the other. G-d requests, "Return to Me and I will return to you," whereas Knesset Yisrael requests, "Bring us back to you and we will return."

This argument has ramifications as to the nature of the redemption: "I, Hashem, in its time will hasten it." (Yeshaya 60:22) Chazal comment: "If they are worthy – I will hasten it; if they are not worthy – in its time." (Sanhedrin 99a) If Israel are worthy, the redemption will come quickly; when they are not worthy – it will come in its due time. Chazal further comment that there are two types of redemption. The redemption can come in a quick and miraculous manner, "Behold! With the clouds of heaven" (Daniel 7:13), and it can come in its own slow pace, "A humble man riding on a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9) The question is whether the redemption will come be'itaruta dele'eila, initiated by G-d, or with itaruta deletata, that we will initiate and we will arouse the redemption through our actions.

Chazal explain in this manner additional contradictions in the verses. In one place it says, "raglei mevasser" (the feet of the herald), in masculine form, while in another place it says, "mevasseret Yerushalayim" (herald of Yerushalayim) in feminine form. Chazal apply to this the pasuk, "How long will you slip away, O wayward daughter?" (Yirmiya 31:21) Rashi explains: How long will you hide and not return to me, you rebellious daughter, "For Hashem has created something new in the world – that the woman will court the man," that the woman will seek after the man. When the woman seeks the man, and Knesset Yisrael seeks G-d, then the redemption will be like a man; it will come quickly and with ease. When they are not worthy, the strength of the redemption will be weak like a woman and will come slowly and lazily.

The Mechilta in Parshat Beshalach states that when the redemption is compared to a man, there is no more subjugation afterwards. However, when it is compared to a woman, they are subjugated once again, just as a woman gives birth with pain, and when the infant is born she is redeemed from her suffering, yet she repeats this and suffers again. Therefore they compare the complete redemption to a man, and the slow redemption to a

woman. This matter depends on the willingness of Israel to take initiative for the first step, or whether they sit passively and expect G-d to do the work. The Midrash Kohelet Rabbah (1:1) relates that R. Chanina b. Dosa sought to bring a large stone up to Yerushalayim to the Beit Hamikdash. He came upon five laborers, but didn't have the sum that they requested, so they left him and went away. G-d arranged for him angels in the form of laborers, and they said to him: "Give us five selaim and we will bring your stone up to Yerushalayim, provided that you put your hand and finger to it." He put his hand and finger in with them, and they found themselves in Yerushalayim. He wanted to give them their wages, but didn't find them. He entered the lishkat hagazit (where the Sanhedrin sat) and inquired about them, and they said to him: "It appears that angels brought your stone to Yerushalayim."

This is just like the Ark, which actually bore those that carried it (Sotah 35a), and yet, "they carried on the shoulder." (Bamidbar 7:9) Without the help from below, G-d does not do anything from above. However, when we help with even our small finger, G-d completes everything from above.

Thus, the Chozeh of Lublin explains Chazal's comment: When G-d, who is called "man" initiates from above, the redemption will appear in the form of a female. However, when the woman provides the seed first, and Knesset Yisrael initiates, then the redemption will come in the masculine form, with force and speed, and there will be no sadness afterwards.

To subscribe to additional mailings, please visit [www.kby.org/torah/subscriptions.cfm](http://www.kby.org/torah/subscriptions.cfm)

---

From: nzion@mail.zahav.net.il Sent: April 03, 2003 To: Ohr Yerushalayim Weekly Parsha Page Subject: OHR YERUSHALAYIM WEEKLY PARSHA PAGE - Parshas Tazria OHR YERUSHALAYIM WEEKLY PARSHA PAGE Parshas Tazria The Ugly Patch and its Two Irremovable Hairs By RABBI MENASHE BLEIWEISS

"Your eyes will behold a king in his splendor," says the navi (Yishayohu 33:17). Rashi, in explaining the king's exemption from the prohibition of washing on Yom Kippur, notes that an impressive appearance has always been essential for a ruler's honor (based on Yoma 73b, 78b). But there are times when even a king is obligated to let his appearance go, leshem Shomayim.

This week's parsha teaches that when a Jew contracts a certain plague, he must approach a Cohen to identify its nature. "If its appearance should be deeper than the skin and have yellow thin hair in it, then the Cohen will pronounce him tamei - it is a nesek (a patch), tzora'as of the head or of the beard." (Vayikra 13:30). But if it is not deeper than the skin, or if lacks yellow hair, and after waiting seven days the patch still has not spread, "then he will be shaved [around the patch] - Rashi], but the patch itself he will not shave" (13:33).

Why should the hair near the nesek be shaved, but not the hair of the nesek itself? Rashi cites the Sifra's explanation: the Cohen is supposed to leave two hairs as a demarcation at the edge of the nesek so that, after another week, it will become clear whether or not it has spread. If it has, the Cohen declares him tamei.

The Sifra itself, not mentioned by Rashi, presents another, slightly different, understanding of our ambiguous posuk. "From where do we know that the one who removes signs of tuma from his nesek violates a negative commandment? Because it is written, "ves hanesek lo yigaleach" (see Yalkut Shimoni 167b). The preservation of these two hairs somehow seems crucial to the healing of the nesek. Rambam and others count the prohibition as one of the 613 mitzvos in the Torah.

Sefer HaChinuch helps shed some light on the significance of the two hairs. After a person sins, he inevitably experiences a certain amount of suffering. The Torah teaches that he must accept his punishment willingly. He should never think that he has the power to nullify the Divine decree, or to run away. His only viable response is to beg for HaShem's mercy in curing his ills. (This explanation also applies to the prohibition of cutting off "baheres," see Rashi on Devorim 24:8.)

In other words, our be-spotted friend is unable to hide, neither from HaShem, nor from his companions. Anyone he encounters during his "incubation period" will likely recoil from his blemish that is located, not coincidentally, right there on his face. The Torah even prevents him from cosmetically modifying his deformity. He must allow those two many hairs to sprout - unplucked, unbleached, untrimmed: a proverbial "kick-me" sign inviting derision and smirks. No beautician in the world can help him. His only recourse is to seek HaShem's compassion.

This brutally public humiliation is consistent with a general, underlying theme of tzora'as. Chazal itemize seven sins associated with arrogance - lashon hara, shefichus domim, shevuas shav, gilui arayos, gasus haruach, gezel, and tzarus ha-ayin (Erchin 16a) - for which the disease is meant as an antidote. The common denominator of all of these transgressions is an exaggerated sense of self. No murderer can avoid at least some sense of megalomania. A miser has difficulty grasping why others deserve his generosity. Most pointedly, the slanderer cuts and slights with his words, elevating his own stature at his friend's expense (the term "metzora" itself shares its root with the "motzi sheim ra"). HaKaddosh Baruch Hu sends all these folks tzaraas and, in doing so, takes them down several notches. When the afflicted soul finally comes for purification, he must bring eitz erez (cedar wood), which Rashi notes is a symbol of haughtiness, together with sola'as ve-eizov (scarlet and hyssop), symbols of lowliness (Vayikra 14:4). Arrogance prefers to stand alone, but the metzora can only achieve purity by tempering his erez with sola'as ve-eizov.

The biblical history of tzora'as, strikingly, is associated with individuals who are either in power or with those who crave it - and need some spiritual tempering. It spares neither the wicked nor even the otherwise righteous who experience lapses. Kayin is the first victim, whose arrogance prevents him from tolerating his brother's spiritual achievement (Breishis Raba 22:12). But great Jewish leaders from Aharon (Shabbas 97a) and Miriam (Bemidbar 12:9) to David Hamelech (Sanhedrin 107a) also suffer, as do non-Jewish generals from Golyos (Vayikra Raba 17:3) to Naamon of Arom (Melachim 2:5:1), and royalty from Bas Paro (Shmos Raba 1:23) to Vashti (Megilla 12b). Tzora'as occasionally strikes common folk as well, but usually those who entertain visions of personal grandeur like Doeig Ho-Adomi (Sanhedrin 106b) and Geichazi (Melachim 2:5:27). In each instance, HaShem reminds His subjects that there is an ultimate King. Beauty and ugliness, we see, both play potentially vital roles in avodas HaShem. The Jewish king and the Cohen Gadol appear in their full visual glory most of the time in order to enhance their avodah on behalf of Klal Yisroel - emes, ma nehedor. Ugliness too can bring us closer to HaShem, as our two stubborn little hairs demonstrate.

Today, beauty and ugliness are widely misunderstood. Not long ago, for a Jewish man to look in the mirror was seen as so aberrant that it fell under the prohibition of "lo yilbash gever simlas isho." (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 171:3). Nowadays, many poskim rule that the prohibition no longer applies because the practice is as common among men as it is among women. While the Torah enjoins women to beautify themselves to attract their husbands (see Rashi, Shemos 38:8), no parallel injunction exists for men. Unless they are kings, they have little reason to spend all that time grooming themselves in front of the mirror - unless driven by personal vanity.

When our parsha forbids the removal of the two hairs from the nesek, even the nesek of a king, it is providing direct mussar for our generation's arrogant pursuit of hedonism. If we lived in a time of more tangible Hashgocho Pratis, HaShem might have sent us bright hairy white spots on our foreheads were we to stare in the mirror for too long. Today, and until the world returns to a state of Nesiyas Ponim with the Ribono Shel Olam, we have to make do by reading the parsha carefully enough to derive the relevant lessons.

E-mail comments or questions to Rabbi Bleiweiss at  
jsisrael@netmedia.net.il.

---

From: [RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG] [tsc@bezeqint.net] Sent April 03, 2003 To: Pareg; Lite1 Subject: [Par-reg]for TAZRIA- METZORA [shiur from last year]

THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [http://www.tanach.org] In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag  
for PARSHAT TAZRIA / METZORA

Most of the time, the progression of topics in Sefer Vayikra is very logical. However, the placement of Parshiot Tazria & Metzora in between Shmini

& Acharei Mot appears to be problematic. In our shiur, we will first explain this question. Then, in our discussion of the answer, we will attempt to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the structure and theme of Sefer Vayikra.

**INTRODUCTION** To clarify our opening question, let's begin by quoting the first pasuk in Parshat Acharei Mot: "And G-d spoke to Moshe and Aharon AFTER THE DEATH of the two sons of Aharon..." (16:1)

Recall however, that the story of tragic death of Aharon's two sons (Nadav & Avihu) was already recorded in the first half of Parshat Shmini (see 10:1-9). Therefore, it would have made much more sense had Sefer Vayikra recorded chapter 16 (i.e. Acharei Mot) immediately after chapter 10 (i.e. back in Parshat Shmini)! Instead, chapters 11 thru 15, detailing numerous laws concerning various types of "tumah" [spiritual uncleanness], 'interrupt' to this logical flow.

To explain why, Part One of our shiur will explore the thematic relationship between these laws of "tumah" and the story of Nadav & Avihu's death. In Part Two, we will build an outline that will summarize these laws of "tumah" that can help us appreciate their detail.

**PART ONE - WHAT DID NADAV & AVIHU DO WRONG?** As you are probably aware, there are numerous opinions concerning what Nadav & Avihu did wrong. The reason for this difference of opinions is simple; the Torah only tells us WHAT they did, but does not explain WHY they were punished. Therefore, each commentator looks for a clue either within that pasuk (see 10:1) or in the 'neighboring' psukim in search of that reason. [For example, the word "aish zarah" in 10:1 implies that Nadav & Avihu may have sinned by offering the wrong type of fire. Alternately, the 'parshia' that follows discusses laws that forbid the kohanim to become intoxicated (see 10:8-11), thus implying that they may have been drunk. (See Rashi, Ramban, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Chizkuni, etc.) In fact, each commentary on this pasuk is so convincing that it is truly hard to choose between them.]

**FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS** Even though the Torah does not tell us specifically WHY Nadav & Avihu were punished, the pasuk that describes their sin does provide us with a very general explanation: "va'yikrvu aish zara - ASHER LO TZIVAH otam" - and they offered a 'foreign fire' that GOD HAD NOT COMMANDED THEM (see 10:1)

Note the phrase "asher lo tzivah otam" (and the "taamei mikra"). It sounds familiar, for in relation to the construction of the Mishkan, we found this phrase repeated numerous times in our study of Parshiot Vayakhel & Pekudei. [To refresh your memory, just note how "ka'asher tzivah Hashem et Moshe" [As G-d has commanded Moshe] concludes just about every "parshia" in Parshat Pekudei. See not only 35:29; 36:1; & 36:5 but also 39:1,5,7,21,26,29,31,32,42,43 & 40:16,19,21,23,25,27,29,32]

Furthermore, this phrase first appeared at the very introduction of the Mishkan unit that began in Parshat Vayakhel: "And Moshe said to the entire congregation of Israel [EYDAH] ZEH HA'DAVAR - ASHER TZIVAH HASHEM - This is what GOD HAS COMMANDED saying..." (see 35:1,4, see also 35:1)

Finally, thus far in Sefer Vayikra we have found this same phrase when the Torah describes the story of the Mishkan's dedication. First of all, in the seven day "miluim" ceremony: "And Moshe said to the entire EYDAH [gathered at the Ohel Moed/8:3] - ZEH HA'DAVAR - This is what GOD HAS COMMANDED to do..." (Vayikra 8:4-5, see also 8:9,13,17,21,36.)

And in Moshe Rabeinu's opening explanation of the special korbanot that were to be offered on Yom ha'Shmini: "And Moshe said: ZEH HA'DAVAR - THIS IS what GOD HAS COMMANDED that you do [in order] that His KAVOD [Glory] can appear upon you [once again]..." (9:6, see also 9:1-5)

Carefully note how Moshe declares this statement in front of the entire "eydah" [congregation] that has gathered to watch this ceremony. [See 9:5! Note also in 9:3-4 that Moshe explains to the people that these korbanot will 'bring back' the "shchinah".] In fact, when you review chapter 9, note how the Torah concludes each stage of this special ceremony with this same phrase. [See 9:5,6,7,10,21.]

Therefore, the Torah's use of this phrase when it describes the sin of Nadav & Avihu ["va'yikrvu aish zara - ASHER LO TZIVAH otam" (see 10:1)] suggests that we search for a thematic connection between that sin and the Mishkan's construction.

**EMPHASIZING A CRITICAL POINT** The special 'inaugural' ceremony on Yom ha'Shmini could definitely be considered the final stage of the Mishkan's construction. [At the completion of that ceremony, the Mishkan would be come fully functional.] Recall however, that before that ceremony began, Moshe had gathered the entire nation to explain its

precise protocol (see 9:1-6). [Note again, the key phrase: "zeh ha'davar asher tzivah Hashem..."/ see 9:4-6.] In fact, Moshe made two very similar remarks before the entire nation before the Mishkan's original construction (Shmot 35:1,4), and before the seven day MILUIM ceremony (see Vayikra 8:1).

Why was it necessary for Moshe to first explain this protocol before the entire congregation who had gathered to watch? One could suggest that due to Aharon's 'mistaken initiative' at "chet ha'egel", G-d found it necessary to emphasize that in regard to the Mishkan, everything must be carried out precisely in accordance to His command - without changing even a minute detail.

With this background, we can better understand why Nadav & Avihu are punished, for even though they may have had good intentions, they strayed from that 'protocol'. During this Yom ha'Shmini inauguration ceremony: "Nadav & Avi each took their firepan, put in it fire and added KTORET, and they brought an alien fire in front of G-d which He HAD NOT COMMANDED THEM [asher lo tzivah]" Nadav & Avihu decide (on their own) to offer KTORET. Their fire is considered "aish zarah" [alien] simply because G-d 'did not command them' to offer it. [Note the special emphasis upon the word "lo" according to the "taamei mikra" (cantillation). See also commentary of Chizkuni on 10:1. Even though Nadav & Avihu may have had the purest intentions, they made one critical mistake - they did not act according to the precise protocol that G-d had prescribed for that day. Considering that the entire EYDAH gathered at the Ohel Moed recognize that Nadav & Avihu have strayed from protocol, they must be punished; for the lesson of that day was exactly this point - that in the Mishkan man must meticulously follow every detail of G-d's command. [Note, this interpretation does not negate any of the other opinions which suggest that Nadav & Avihu had done something else wrong [such as disrespect of Moshe, etc.]. It simply allows us to understand the severity their punishment EVEN if they had done nothing 'wrong' at all (other than doing something that G-d had not commanded). See also commentary of Rashbam on 10:1 in this regard.]

From a thematic perspective, their punishment under these circumstances is quite understandable. Recall the theological dilemma created by a MISHKAN - a physical representation (or symbol) of a transcendental G-d. Once a physical object is used to represent G-d, the danger exists that man may treat that object [and then possibly another object] as a god itself. On the other hand, without a physical representation of any sort, it becomes difficult for man to develop any sort of relationship with G-d. Therefore, G-d allows a Mishkan - a symbol of His Presence - but at the same time, He must emphasize that He can only be worshiped according to the precise manner "as G-d had commanded Moshe". [See also Devarim 4:9-24 for the Torah's discussion of a similar fear that man may choose his own object to represent G-d [a "tavnit..." / compare Shmot 25:8-9 "v'akmal".]

**THE PROBLEM OF 'GOOD INTENTIONS'** This specific problem of 'following G-d's command' in relation to the Mishkan takes on extra meaning on Yom ha'Shmini. Recall our explanation of Aharon's sincere intentions at the incident of "chet ha'egel", i.e. he wanted to provide Bnei Yisrael with a physical symbol of G-d, which they could worship. [See previous shiur on Ki-tisa.] Despite Aharon's good intentions, his actions led to a disaster. The sin of "chet ha'egel" caused G-d to remove His "shchina" from the camp of Bnei Yisrael (see Shmot 33:1-7).

Due to Moshe's intervention, G-d finally allowed His "shechinah" - to return to the MISHKAN that Bnei Yisrael had built. Unfortunately, when Nadav & Avihu make a mistake (similar to Aharon's sin at chet ha'egel) on the very day of the Mishkan's dedication, they must be punished immediately. [This may also explain their father's reaction of: "va'YIDOM Aharon" [and Aharon stood silent] (see 10:3).]

Finally, this interpretation can help us understand Moshe's statement to Aharon: "This is what G-d had spoken -B'KROVEI E'KADESH..." (see 10:3). Recall the parallel that we have discussed many times between Har Sinai and the Mishkan. At Har Sinai, Bnei Yisrael AND the Kohanim were forewarned: "And G-d told Moshe: Go down and WARN the people that they must not break through [the barrier surrounding] Har Sinai, lest they gaze at Hashem and perish. The KOHANIM also, who COME NEAR HASHEM, must sanctify themselves ("yitkadashu" - compare "b'krovei akadesh"/10:3), lest G-d punish them." (Shmot 19:21)

As this inaugural ceremony parallels the events of Har Sinai, G-d's original warning concerning approaching Har Sinai, even for the KOHANIM, now applies to the Mishkan as well. Therefore, extra caution is

necessary, no matter how good one's intentions may be. [See similar explanation by Chizkuni on 10:3!]

BACK TO SEFER VAYIKRA With this in mind, let's return to our original question concerning the order of Parshiot in Sefer Vayikra. Nadav & Avihu approached the Mishkan in an improper manner (see chapter 10). Hence, this story is immediately followed by an entire set of laws that discuss improper entry into the Mishkan, i.e. chapters 11->15 detailing the various laws of "tumah v'tahara", which regulate who is permitted and who is forbidden to enter the Mishkan. Upon the completion of this section discussing who can enter the Mishkan, Sefer Vayikra returns (in chapter 16) to G-d's command to Aharon concerning how he himself can properly enter the holiest sanctuary of the Mikdash (on Yom Kippur). In Part Two, we discuss the content of this special unit of mitzvot from chapter 11->15. Copyright (c) 2002 Menachem Leibtag To SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE to this list or for more information - go to the following link: <http://mail.tanach.org/mailman/listinfo/par-reg>

---