

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON TAZRIA METZORA - 5758

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sefira@torah.org Counting The Omer Reminder List Tonight, the evening of Friday, May 1, will be day 21, which is 3 weeks of the omer. Don't Forget! Yours, The people at Project Genesis

weekly@jer1.co.il * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Tazria/Metzora This publication is available in HTML format at <http://www.ohr.org.il/tw/5758/vayikra/tazria.htm> Insights

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME "The kohen will look and behold - the blemish has not changed its color." (Lit. "has not changed its eye") (13:55) Give me one word in English for the French word "chic." Chic is something so quintessentially French that to translate it into English would require a truckload of adjectives. The characteristics of a nation are evidenced in its language. In every language there are words which cannot be directly translated into any other tongue. There's a word in Yiddish - to fargin. To fargin means to feel pleasure at someone else's success without the slightest twinge of jealousy. Happiness depends on the way we look at life. We can see our glass as half empty or half full. It all depends on how you use your eyes. In this week's Parsha, there is a lengthy description of a spiritual disease called tzara'as. One of the shortcomings which brought on this affliction was the failure to fargin, a narrowness of the eye, a constriction of the vision. When a person focuses on reality in the correct fashion, he realizes that there is nothing in this world which is mere coincidence, there is no slapdash extemporizing. For example, let's say my next door neighbor and I both buy lottery tickets. He buys ticket number 17756233/a/th/567 and I buy ticket number 17756233/a/th/568. Two weeks later, I wake up and hear him shouting at the top of his voice "I won ten million dollars! I won ten million dollars!" If my eyes are focused on reality correctly, immediately I should feel tremendous happiness for him, because I had no chance of winning the lottery at all. Even though I had the next ticket, it could have been ticket number 00001 for all the difference it would have made. Happiness is understanding that what Hashem decrees for someone is that person's, and always was his. There's no "coming close" to what is allotted for someone else. To think otherwise is self-delusion. Realizing this is one of the secrets of happiness in this world. Interestingly, the word in Hebrew for both the "affliction of tzara'as" and the word for "pleasure" are spelled with exactly the same letters: nun, gimmel, ayin. The affliction of tzara'as is called nega. Pleasure in Hebrew is oneg. The only difference between these two words is where you put the letter ayin. Ayin in Hebrew means "eye." If you put the ayin in the wrong place, you end up with a spiritual disease - a nega. If you put the ayin in the right place - if you put your eye in the right place - you have pleasure - oneg. The pleasure that comes from farginning. The pleasure that comes from looking at the world through the lens of reality.

WAR OF THE WORDS "Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: This shall be the law of the Metzora" (14:1) Metzora - 'Motzi-(shem)-ra' - to speak evil of someone Lit. "to bring out a bad name" On tortured steel wheels, the doors of the factory rolled back majestically. There in the steel gray light of dawn stood the machines. One behind the other in a long, long row whose vanishing point was somewhere in the middle of next week. They were dull blue and gray. Majestic and marvelous. All 248 of them. Machine after machine after machine. The controller led his new employee down the central aisle. They passed them all in reverent silence. After what seemed like an eon, they arrived at the end. They stood together, right at the end of this vast array of industrial power - looking at it. There it was. As different from the rest of the machines as Moby Dick from other whales. It was huge, awesome, alone and forbidding. "This is it," said the controller. "This is the

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one. Without this machine, all the others are worth exactly ... nothing. Nothing at all. On this machine hangs life and death itself." The tongue is the most powerful machine in the world. In that vast factory called Man, there are two hundred and forty eight machines - each part corresponding to a mitzvah. But the tongue has a power which is greater than them all. One word can kill at distances beyond the range of the most powerful rocket. One word can cause a plague more noxious than anthrax. And yet, one word can heal with more power than open-heart surgery. One word can do more than the biggest, brightest bunch of flowers in the world. The world was created with words: "In the beginning G-d created the Heavens and the Earth...." He created the whole of existence with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. And He gave over to man this incredibly powerful machine - the tongue. There is no animal in the world that can speak. They can make noises, it's true. But to date, no whale has published a book of poems. Man alone in all of existence is the Speaker. He has been entrusted with a machine more powerful than the atom, and more dangerous. For with one word he can destroy worlds and with one word he can create them.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DADDY! "A woman, when she will give birth..." (12:2) When a firstborn child comes into this world, two creations take place: The child, and the parents. The three-way team of Hashem and the parents create the child, but the child also "creates" the parents. Up till now they were merely people. Now they are parents. The Midrash says if man is worthy "he precedes all of creation." How can man precede all creation if he was created last - on the sixth day? In Jewish law, the father bequeaths to his firstborn a double portion. Why? Because it is this child who made his father into a father. The Jewish People are called "my son, my first born, Israel" because it was the Jewish People who made Hashem, so to speak, into the Father of the world. For it is they who testify to His existence. All Israel are Hashem's first born. If, by our actions, we make the name of Heaven dear in this world, if people look at us and see that there is a G-d who rules, then we are considered worthy. And then we "precede all Creation." When we make Hashem the Father of the world, we become worthy of being the "firstborn."

Sources: A Rose By Any Other Name - Mesilas Yesharim, Chidushei HaRim War Of The Words - Chafetz Chaim Happy Birthday, Daddy! - Meshech Chochma

LOVE OF THE LAND Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael A DESIRABLE PORTION "My eye gives you counsel," Hashem says to us through King David (Tehillim 32:8), and our Sages in the Midrash interpret this as a Divine "wink of the eye" in regard to Eretz Yisrael. A king once made a feast for everyone in his palace. When the serving plate was brought before them, the king winked a hint to his favorite guest to take a particularly good portion. When he realized that the hint was not understood, the king took the portion with his own hands and presented it to his beloved. In similar fashion, when Hashem divided His world amongst the nations, each of them selected a land double the size of Eretz Yisrael. Hashem winked to the Jewish People to choose Eretz Yisrael but they were reluctant to do so because it was so much smaller than all the other lands. What did Hashem do? He took Eretz Yisrael into His hand and presented it to His favorite people. This is what the Prophet Yirmiyahu alludes to when he says in Hashem's Name (Yirmiyahu 3:19) "I presented you with a desirable land." Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim 32

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Peninim Ahl HaTorah Parshas Tazria-Metzora by Rabbi A Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

"And if she bears a female, she shall be in an impure condition for two weeks." (12:6) In the case of the birth of a female the days of tumah, impurity, and tohar, cleanliness, are doubled. While the entire period of y'mei tumah v'taharah after a male birth consists of forty days, a female birth requires eighty days. Rav S.R. Hirsch, zl, suggests that the "double" period

of time required for a female birth indicates a dual cycle=C4one for the mother and one for her female child. This extra cycle of tumah v'taharah accomplishes for the female child what the Bris Milah does for a male. The striking characteristic of a Jewish woman, the emblem of Jewish womanhood which distinguishes her as a "daughter of Sarah Imeinu," is her ability to sublimate herself to the measure of morality and modesty to which man has a constant remainder in the form of the Bris Milah on his body. Thus, these laws of ritual purity serve as a reminder to the female of the preparation and training required for developing such moral virtue. The Bris Milah is the father's obligation. This imbues him with the responsibility to raise his son with a strong dedication to Torah observance. The double period of y'mei tumah infuses the mother with her two-fold mission. First, she is to raise her daughter to represent the character of the Jewish woman. Second, she must do so, by herself being a role model of this noble virtue. The maternal influence upon the moral values of a daughter is greater than the parallel influence upon a son. The obligation to educate a son lies in a greater sense upon the father in whom the son sees an example, perhaps a portrait of his own future state. For a daughter, however, the mother is the standard who sets the tone for her moral character development. Thus, with each female birth the mother must doubly prepare herself to lead her child along the lofty path of virtue and purity.

"And I will place a tzaraas affliction upon a house in the land of your possession... and he shall declare to the Kohen, saying, 'something like a plague has appeared to Me on the house.. and the Kohen shall quarantine the house for a seven day period.'" (14:34,35,38) A plague on a house was apparently a supernatural occurrence. Rashi cites the Midrash that says when the Canaanites saw that their end was near, they hid their valuables in the walls of their homes. Hashem placed affliction upon a house so that when the house was to be dismantled, the Jewish owner would find the hidden treasures. Consequently, the plague was a blessing in disguise. We may question the reason for a seven-day quarantine on the house. If the sole purpose of the quarantine was to expose the treasure, the mere indication of a plague should signal the "demolition crew" to search for the treasure. What lesson can be learned? In his sefer, Eish Kodesh, the Piazneser Rebbe, zl, offers a novel insight. Indeed, we have no idea of the hidden motives behind a given mitzvah. We can, however, attempt to glean valuable lessons to which the Torah alludes, since we know that everything Hashem does for us is an expression of His beneficence. Even when we suffer, when we are subject to denigration and persecution in the most cruel manner, we know that Hashem has a positive purpose for His decrees. When the persecutions do not seem to make sense, when the afflictions run counter to the goal of Jewish survival, then we have a problem coming to terms with them. We must remember that the Piazneser wrote his sefer when he was interred in the concentration camp. He wrote at a time when the decree from Hashem destroyed shuls, mikvaos, schools and yeshivos for children, through which the spiritual fiber of our people would be maintained. When we are faced with such decrees, our faith might be open to question. Can it be that even now Hashem is doing this for our good? What good can there be if there are no yeshivos, no shuls, nowhere to go to nourish and maintain our spiritual persona? This is the underlying message of the seven-day quarantine prior to dismantling the house and discovering its hidden treasure. During these seven days there does not seem to be rationale for the seven day period. First, the house is sealed for what might seem to be no apparent reason. Later, it is rendered tamei, a decision which is the precursor for exposing its previously concealed treasure. Here we have an instance in which we cannot rationalize the quarantine of the house, yet we find out later that it was for a specific purpose. We are taught that there are situations when we simply do not understand why Hashem acts in the manner that He does. We soon discover, however, the positive results of this seemingly ambiguous behavior. As always, we are enjoined to trust in Hashem regardless of the questions we may have. One day our questions will all be answered.

HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORAH By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

When a woman conceives and gives birth... (12:2)

THE YOLEDES IN HALACHAH

SCHEDULED DELIVERY: Unless a doctor explicitly orders it for the safety of either mother or child(1), it is prohibited for a woman to schedule the birth of her baby. There are various halachic, kabbalistic and hashkafic reasons offered by early and contemporary poskim for this prohibition: The earlier time may be "in a bad mazal"(2); Inducing an early birth may cause the child to die before his allotted time(3); It is possible to miscalculate the time of conception and erroneously assume that the pregnancy is complete when it is, in fact, in its eighth month(4). Inducing birth would thus cause the baby to be born prematurely. The halachah considers a woman who gives birth to be in "danger". Until her Divinely appointed time arrives, she is forbidden to put herself in danger(5). As the Mishnah(6) states, one enters this world "against his will". To bring a baby into this world before his Divinely appointed time of arrival is to contradict the rabbinic dictum(7). Sometimes a woman requires the services of a specialist for compelling medical reasons. If the specialist will be available only at pre-arranged times, the delivery may be scheduled. A rav should be consulted. Unless it is an emergency, a planned delivery [when permitted] should not be scheduled for Thursday or Friday(8), as no elective surgery may be scheduled on those days(9).

PREPARATIONS FOR A SHABBOS(10) DELIVERY We have established that a woman giving birth is halachically considered to be a dangerously ill person, and it is permitted, indeed it is a mitzvah, to desecrate the Shabbos on her behalf. Once a woman is in labor, she, her husband, or anyone else who is in a position to do so, must do everything they can to ensure a successful delivery. Nevertheless, whatever can be done before Shabbos to minimize the desecration of Shabbos, must be done in advance(11). Indeed, an early authority(12) mentions that a person should daven that his wife not give birth on Shabbos. Accordingly, a woman who enters the beginning stages of labor before Shabbos, although she would normally delay going to the hospital for as long as possible, should travel to the hospital before Shabbos begins so that she will not have to travel on Shabbos(13). From an halachic standpoint, there are two basic methods of transporting a woman to the hospital on Shabbos: a) A non-Jewish driver, e.g. a neighbor, ambulance or taxi service may bring her; b) a Jewish driver, e.g., her husband or a neighbor may drive her. If a woman can be driven to the hospital by a non-Jew without compromising her safety or peace of mind, the halachah requires her to arrange - before Shabbos - for a non-Jew to drive her on Shabbos regardless of the expenses entailed. As stated earlier, once Shabbos begins, we must do everything in our power to ensure the baby's safe delivery. Still, whatever we can do in advance to avoid or lessen the desecration of Shabbos must be done. The following can and must be done before Shabbos begins: The phone number of the doctor and of a non-Jewish neighbor, ambulance or taxi service should be noted in an easily accessible, non-muktzeh location. When possible, payment should be pre-arranged. Whatever house or garage lights that would be needed to facilitate leaving for the hospital in the middle of the night, should be turned on before Shabbos(14). Personal items the woman will need at the hospital should be packed in a bag before Shabbos. Arrangements for a baby-sitter to stay with other children should be made before Shabbos. If the hospital is outside the techum Shabbos (approx. 4000 feet from the last house in the city), some poskim recommend that one should be mafkir (renounce possession) all the items that are being taken along to the hospital(15). Other poskim are not particular about this(16).

TRAVELING TO THE HOSPITAL ON SHABBOS WITH A NON-JEW As soon as a woman experiences steady contractions, even though she is quite sure that she is far from giving birth, she (or any other person) may call the doctor or the designated driver to take her to the hospital. She should not wait for the latter stages of labor before going to the

hospital(17). When making the phone call(18) on Shabbos to the doctor or the non-Jewish driver, the receiver should be lifted off the cradle in an abnormal manner, e.g., with one's elbow or teeth(19) - time permitting. The conversation should be limited to a bare minimum, although it is permitted to say "hello" and "thank you", etc(20). After the conversation is over, the receiver may not be returned to the cradle unless the phone line is needed for the sake of the patient, or if not hanging up will tie up the doctor's line. Then, too, the receiver should be hung up in an abnormal manner, as described above(21). Any item which the woman will need on Shabbos may be taken along, even if there is no eiruv or if the item is muktzeh. If time allows, the non-Jew should be asked to carry the woman's bag to the vehicle. [Unless an eiruv exists, a Tehilim should not be taken to the hospital on Shabbos, for the merit of keeping Shabbos is greater than saying Tehilim. This should be explained to the woman(22).] If, during the drive, labor stopped and the woman feels that she does not need to go to the hospital, it is permitted to tell the non-Jew to take her and her companion back home if they cannot return safely and comfortably on foot - which is almost always the case. If it is the expectant mother's wish and it would help to relax her, her husband or another individual may accompany her to the hospital, even if their assistance is not medically warranted(23). The person going along may also bring with him basic food necessities that will be required on Shabbos(24). The non-Jew should be asked to carry the items into the vehicle and from the vehicle into the hospital. When time allows it, the door to the vehicle should be opened and closed by the non-Jew. If no babysitter for the other children can be found, it is permitted to ask the non-Jewish driver to drive the children to another person's home(25).

TRAVELING TO THE HOSPITAL ON SHABBOS WITH A JEW

In the absence of any other alternative or when arrangements were not made in advance, it is permitted for a Jew (the husband or any other person(26) to drive the woman to the hospital himself. If one is aware before Shabbos that the driver may be a Jew, he should prepare before Shabbos for that eventuality. Therefore: The shortest possible route to the hospital must be checked and planned. Exact change for any possible tolls should be prepared and placed in the car. The car which will be driven must not be blocked by other cars or other obstructions. The dome light bulb in the car should be loosened or removed before Shabbos; the air conditioner, radio and tape recorder should be on the "off" position. License, registration and other papers that are required for driving or that will be needed at the hospital should be placed in the car before Shabbos. Where there is no eiruv, clothing, food and other items that will be needed at the hospital should be placed in the car before Shabbos. If the hospital is out of the techum Shabbos, any belongings which are in the car [especially those that do not belong to him(27)] that are not necessary for the woman (car seat, tapes, etc.) should be removed from the car(28). If this is difficult to do, then those items [which are his] should be pronounced hefker. One who failed to properly prepare himself or the car as outlined above, must nevertheless proceed to the hospital in the safest(29), quickest way he can(30). If he did not unscrew or remove the dome light before Shabbos, then while the door is still open and the light is on, the control knob should be turned [in an abnormal manner] so that the light will remain on after the door closes. If he forgot to do that, he should [in an abnormal manner] loosen the light bulb, so that it does not turn on again when the door is opened(31). One may drive to any hospital that he prefers, as long as the preference is not determined by the desire to save money. Once he arrives at the hospital emergency room, the car may be placed in the "park" position, but the ignition and the lights may not be turned off(32). [If he failed to loosen the dome light or to follow one of the other options outlined above, then the door may not be closed upon leaving the car, since closing the door will cause the light to be turned off.] He may ask a non-Jew to take the car(33), park it and return the keys to him after Shabbos.

GENERAL NOTES: A woman in active labor(34) is a niddah and her husband may no longer touch her. If she cannot walk unaided, a woman should assist her. If no woman is available, the ambulance attendant or taxi driver should assist her. If only her husband is available to assist her, he may

do so(35). Contemporary poskim are divided if it is permitted or advisable for a husband to be in the same room with his wife during delivery. When a woman, however, insists that her husband be with her, it is permitted to do so, so as not to unsettle her during the birth(36). All poskim agree that it is strictly prohibited for him to observe the actual birthing process(37).

A husband who is in mourning during shivah, may accompany his wife to the hospital if she asks or needs his assistance(38). A hospital does not require eiruvei chatzeiros and carrying in its corridors or from room to room is permitted(39).

A woman who gives birth, even to a stillborn child, is considered a "dangerously ill" person for up to 72 hours after giving birth. As long as either the patient herself, the doctor or nurse requests anything on her behalf, the request should be fulfilled on Shabbos. Whenever possible, a shinui (action done in an abnormal manner) is required(40). Upon the birth of a male child, the blessing of Hatov v'hameitiv should be recited(41). Although an Hatov v'hameitiv is not recited upon the birth of a female child, the blessing of Shehechyanu is said the very first time a parent sees their daughter(42). When twins (a boy and a girl) are born, only Hatov v'hameitiv is said(43). The husband can be motzi his wife for these blessings. A woman who gave birth on Friday night and was unable to say or hear Kiddush, should say the Friday night Kiddush on Shabbos day, omitting Va'yechulu(44).

Ordinarily, one who misses a tefillah due to an emergency, makes up that missed tefillah during the next tefillah (tefillas tashlumin). However, a husband who was preoccupied with his wife's labor and childbirth throughout the time period allotted for any given tefillah(45), is not required to make up the tefillah which he missed(46). It is not permitted to instruct the hospital staff to place a call on Shabbos that will notify the family back home - either by a predetermined number of rings or by leaving a message on the answering machine - about the birth of a baby.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Chazon Ish is quoted (in a written responsum by Harav Y. Y. Kani evsky, published in Kryana Deigrata 184) as ruling that once two weeks into the tenth month have passed, labor may be induced. 2 Rokeach (Koheles 3:11). 3 Arizal quoted in Sefer Hakaneh. See also Ravad's preface to Sefer Yetzira. 4 Harav Y. Kamenetsky (Emes le -Ya'akov O.C. 331:5; Harav M. Hershter (Halachah v'Refuah, vol. 2, pg. 64). See also Kisevei Harav Henkin 2:85. 5 Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:74; O.C. 4:105-6; Harav Y. Kamenetsky, ibid. 6 Avos 4:24. 7 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 11 and Eis la-Ledes 1:14). 8 Some poskim forbid Wednesday as well - See Mishnah Berurah 248:4, 9 Harav Y. Kamenetsky, ibid.; Harav Y.Y. Kanievsky (Kryana Deigerta); Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 32:33. If, however, the doctor's surgery day is only on one of those days, it is permitted - Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Shemiras Shabbos Khilchasah 32 note 97.) 10 Almost all of the following halachos pertain to Yom Tov as well. 11 Mishnah Berurah 330:1. 12 Sefer Chasidim 793, based on the Talmud Niddah 38a. 13 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 36:7 quoting Ktzos ha-Shulchan. See similar ruling in Igros Moshe O.C. 1:131 concerning a doctor who may be needed for Shabbos duty. 14 Kaf ha-Chayim 330:1. 15 Advice offered by Harav C. Kanievsky (quoted in Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 25) based on O.C. 401:1. 16 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Minchas Shelomo 15; Shemiras Shabbos Khilchasah 40:65). See also Minchas Yitzchak 9:37. 17 Mishnah Berurah 330:9. 18 When possible, the phone call should be made by a non-Jew or a minor. When using a minor, it is better not to use one's own children - See Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 334:54. 19 When these options are not workable, the next best method is to use the telephone with two hands or having two people dial. See Nishmas Avraham 5, pg. 44-45 for an explanation. 20 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Shemiras Shabbos Khilchasah 32:111). 21 It is important to stress, though, that all of the halachos that pertain to making the phone call, hanging up, driving on Shabbos, etc., are only to be followed when time allows it. Once the labor is fully underway everything should be done in the speediest, safest manner, as if the labor is taking place on a weekday. 22 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 94). If the woman insists to take a Tehilim or any other sefer along, it is permitted to do so. 23 Igros Chazon Ish 1:141; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:132. 24 Minchas Yitzchak 8:30-1. It is questionable, though, if one may take along a siddur, etc. 25 This is permitted both for the safety of the children who will fear staying alone (see Mishnah Berurah 328:38) and for the peace of mind of the mother. 26 Some poskim say that it is preferable to use an observant Jew than a non-observant Jew - Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 81. 27 See Minchas Shelomo 15. 28 Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 20, 25, 101. 29 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Nishmas Avraham 5, pg. 176) advises that in order to avoid possible accidents, normal driving procedures should be followed. 30 If time allows, any carrying that needs to be done should be done with a shinui, such as carrying the required papers under his clothing or hat, etc. 31 Some cars are equipped with a switch which does not allow the dome light to go on when the door opens. This is a better option than loosening the bulb, since loosening the bulb may involve the prohibition of sofer (demolition). 32 Whenever possible, one should explore before Shabbos the available choices for parking and figure out the best solution for his particular case. 33 Hinting is preferred to asking directly - see O.C. 307:19. 34 The are various definitions in the poskim for "active labor", see Badei ha-Shulchan 194:30. 35 See Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 195:25-27 and Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:90. 36 See Nishmas Avraham Y.D. 195:3 and Teshuvos Bnei Anim 33 for an elaboration. 37 Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:75. 38 Igros Moshe Y.D. 4:45. 39 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Nishmas Avraham 4, pg. 63) based on Beir Halachah 370:3 and Mahrasham 6:17. See also leninet ruling by Harav Y. Roth (Kovetz Beis Talmud 3, pg. 56). 40 O.C. 330:4. 41 O.C. 223:1. 42 Mishnah Berurah 223:2. 43 Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 176. 44 O.C. 278:8. 45 If, however, he was occupied with her labor for only part of the zman tefillah, but forgot to daven when he had the chance, he must then make up that lost tefillah. 46 See

Mishnah Berurah 71:4; 93:8.

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drasha@torah.org DRASHA TAZRIA-METZORAH -- HOLISTIC

HEALING Tzora'as, the main discussion of the portions of Tazria and Metzora is an affliction that discolors human skin, clothing, hair, beards and even homes. The laws of tzora'as are detailed, complex and intricate. There are Talmudic tractates that deal with the proper procedure for purification and a litany of laws that must be followed flawlessly. The ramifications of tzora'as have more than physiological implications, they have a great theological impact as well. The discoloration of skin does not necessarily reflect a chemical impropriety or a nutritional deficiency. It is a heavenly sign of a spiritual flaw, primarily related to a deficient speech pattern. It is a disease that afflicts a gossip. The one in question must go to the kohen (priest) who instructs him in the proper procedure to rid himself of both the blemish and the improper behavior that caused its appearance. The Torah tells us that the fate of the stricken man is totally dependent upon the will of the kohen. The kohen is shown the negah (blemish) and has the power to declare it tamei (impure) or tahor (pure). In fact, even if all signs point to the declaration of impurity, if the kohen, for any reason deems the person tahor or refuses to declare him tamei, the man remains tahor. He is not tamei until openly and clearly labeled as such by the kohen. Yet the verse seems a bit redundant. "And the kohen shall look at the negah affliction on the skin and behold it has changed to white and appears deeper than the skin of the flesh - it is a tzora'as and the kohen shall look at him and declare him tamei" (Leviticus 13:3). Why must the kohen look twice? The Torah should tell us that the kohen shall look at the negah, and if the affliction is white and appears deeper than the flesh of the skin, then the kohen shall declare him impure. What purpose is served by looking again?

Rabbi Abraham Twerski tells the story of a young man who came to the chief Rabbi of Vilna, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky with a request. As this young man's father was applying for a Rabbinical position in a town that the sage was familiar with, he asked the rabbi for a letter of approbation on his father's behalf. Rabbi Grodzinsky felt that the candidate was not worthy of the position, but instead of flatly refusing, he just said that he would rather not mix into the Rabbinical affairs of another city and was sure that the council of that city would make a fair and wise decision. Rabbi Grodzinsky did not realize the tirade that would be forthcoming. The young man began to spew insults and aspersions at him. The sage, however, accepted them in silence. After a few minutes of hearing the abusive language, Rabbi Grodzinsky excused himself and left the room. Students who witnessed the barrage were shocked at the young man's brazen audacity. They were even more surprised that the Rav did not silence the young man at the start of the barrage. Rabbi Grodzinsky turned to them. "You cannot view that onslaught on its own. You must look at the bigger picture. This young man was defending the honor of his father, and in that vein I had to overlook his lapse."

The kohen who is instructed to deal with the stricken individual should not only look at the negah. He must look again. He must look at the man. Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk explains that even if the negah has all the attributes that should lead to a declaration of tumah, there are other factors that must be weighed. If the man is a groom, about to wed, impurity must not be declared. It will ruin the upcoming festivities. If there are other mitigating circumstances, then a declaration of contagion must be postponed. Perhaps the Torah is telling us more. It is easy to look at a flaw and declare it as such. But one must look at the whole person. He must ask himself "how is my declaration going to affect the future of this person." He must consider the circumstances that caused the negah. He must look again - once at the negah - and once at the man. There are those who interpret the adage in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the Fathers), "judge all (of the) people in a good way,"

as do not look at a partial person: rather, judge all of the person -- even a flaw may have a motivation or rationale behind it. The kohen may look at the negah, but before he pronounces tamei he must look again. He must look beyond the blemish. He must look at the man. Good Shabbos

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parasha-page@jer1.co.il The Weekly Internet P * A * R * A * S * H * A - P * A * G * E by Mordechai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem Kornfeld@virtual.co.il

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PARASHAT TAZRIA-METZORA 5758 UNJUST SUFFERING?

There are seven sins for which one is punished with Tzara'at [leprous outbreaks]: slander, murder, swearing needlessly, adultery, arrogance, theft, and stinginess. (Erchin 15a) The Talmud informs us in clear terms that Tzara'at is not simply a chance disease. It is a tool Hashem uses to discipline his nation and teach them to return to His just ways. In a broader sense, this applies not only to Tzara'at but to every disease or discomfort. Tzara'at is singled out in the statement cited above only in order to relate it to a narrow list of specific sins. In truth, "a person does not stub his toe unless it was decreed upon him on high" (Chulin 7b). For this reason, the conclusion of the Gemara in Shabbos (55a) is particularly perplexing. The Gemara in Shabbos begins by challenging a statement made by Rav Ami which relates death to misdeed, and suffering to sin. How can one say, asks the Gemara, that one only dies for his own sins and not for another's? We find that Moshe and Aharon, who scrupulously observed all the Mitzvot of the Torah, passed away? And according to an Agadic tradition, "Four people passed away, sinless, simply because the serpent persuaded Adam to sin and eat from the Tree of Knowledge and for no other reason." (These four were Binyamin son of Yakov, Amram father of Moshe, King David's father and his son, Kil'av.) It must be that Rav Ami is mistaken. Death, concludes the Gemara, may indeed occur without being brought about by misdeed, and suffering may occur without being brought about by sin. This conclusion is extremely puzzling: (a) How are we to understand this strange assertion, which seems to not only contradict the citation at the start of our discussion but to violate our most basic understanding of justice? (b)

Secondly, the Gemara relates that Rav Ami cited biblical sources for his statement. "The soul that sins, it alone shall die; a son will not bear the sin of his father..." (Yechezkel 18:20); "I shall chastise them for their rebellious acts, and punish them with Tzara'at and the like for their sins..." (Tehilim 89:33). How, then, can the Gemara conclude that death and suffering are not necessarily related to one's sins (but may relate to the sin of his ancestors, such as Adam and Eve)?

II We may add to our list another few questions.

(c) The Gemara in Berachot 7a deals with the suffering of the righteous. At first, the Gemara suggests that the righteous will suffer only if their parents were wicked. But the Gemara immediately rejects this statement, asserting that "children will not die because of the sins of their fathers (Devarim 24:16)" unless they themselves follow in the evil ways of their fathers. Rather, when a righteous person suffers it is because he is not fully righteous -- he is flawed, albeit in some minor way, and that is why he is being punished. How can this Gemara be reconciled with the Gemara in Shabbos, which seems to come to the opposite conclusion -- an entirely righteous person can indeed be punished simply for his fathers' sins? (d) Also, how can the Gemara prove from the deaths of Moshe and Aharon that people die sinlessly? The Torah itself tells us that Moshe and Aharon sinned, and that for that reason they did not merit to enter the Promised

Land but died with the rest of the nation (Bamidbar 20:12)? (The Gemara in Shabbos indeed cites a conflicting opinion that asserts that Moshe and Aharon sinned. Our question, however, is how the opinion we cited above can assert otherwise.) Closer scrutiny of these last two questions leads us to the answer to all of our questions.

III To answer our questions, we must first define the terms 'misdeed' and 'sin' ('Chet' and 'Avon'). A person may be found lacking in one of two ways. He may transgress the Torah's explicit commandments, or he may perform flawlessly but be lacking in *heart*. He may harbor an urge to sin (even if he conquers the urge) or emotions that are not entirely appropriate to the situation. These inner feelings sometimes rise to the surface and express themselves in public; even so, they do not involve transgressions of any of the Torah's commandments per se. When the Gemara tells us in Berachot that a righteous person only suffers if he is flawed, it is referring to *any* flaw -- even the most minute. A flaw of the heart is also reason for suffering. (The proportion of the suffering to the misdeed is subject for another discussion: Why should a nearly-perfect person suffer, at times, more than an established sinner -- see Yevamot 121b, "uSevivav Nis'arah..."). Similarly, although Moshe and Aharon acted inappropriately in the incident of the "Waters of Strife" (Bamidbar 20), they certainly did not transgress any of the Torah's commandments. According to the Rambam (in Shemoneh Perakim, end of #4), Moshe's sin was simply that he expressed anger without being told to do so by Hashem. Such "mis-emoting" is common even among the prophets, the Rambam writes.

The Gemara in Shabbos does not mean to assert that a person can suffer unjustly. It means to say that death and suffering do not always stem from transgressions of the Torah's commandments. They may be traced, at times, to much smaller infractions, such as desires and emotions that run uncontrolled. The verse cited by Rav Ami may also be interpreted in this manner. A person will die only if *he* sins; but expressions of lust and inappropriate emotions also qualify as sins ('Chet' and 'Avon') in this connotation.

IV However, this is only part of the answer to our question. As we mentioned earlier, the Gemara in Shabbos explains that some extremely righteous Jews died only because of the sin of Adam. This statement, and the implication of the entire discussion there that a person may suffer for his *father's* sins, would not seem to be resolved in the manner we have suggested. Even if a person is punished for such subtle sins as emotions, they must be his *own* sins, and not his father's. As we saw in Berachot, "Children will not die because of the sins of their fathers!" To answer this question, we must refer to the teachings of the Ramban in Bereishit (2:9). Before Adam sinned, Ramban explains, Man was emotionless and lustless. He was able to sin only through the influence of external forces -- the Primeval Serpent's evil persuasion. After he sinned, though, these forces became a part of him. He himself became a creature ruled by emotion and lust. Performing the Divine Will became a constant battle, which we must fight to this very day. The verse indeed provides strong support for this interpretation: "Hashem created Man straight (i.e., without desire to sin); but Man brought upon himself all sorts of figuring (i.e., forces, such as lusts, that cause him to do evil)" (Kohelet 7:29 and Rashi). Ever since Adam and Eve, the Evil Inclination is integrated into our very being. It is "the bogus god that is inside the body of a person." This may be part of what Chazal are alluding to by saying that "The serpent [= Evil Inclination] injected into Eve its putrefaction" (Shabbos 146a). Even the most perfect of people cannot fully control their emotions and lusts (as evidenced by the Rambam in Shemoneh Perakim, cited above). The four sinless people who died fell because of faulty expressions of emotion and minute shows of desire. Since these stemmed from Adam's sin, it is indeed appropriate to attribute their deaths to "the persuasion of the serpent" and the sin of Adam, their ancestor. In a sense, they died due to the 'sins' of others (i.e., transgressions of a Divine decree, the first category of sin in section III). But on the other hand, those acts manifested themselves as personal 'sins' as well (emotions and lusts, the second category of sin). The Gemara thus means to say that death may be brought about by an ancestor's transgression-type sin, even if the

descendant never transgressed a commandment of the Torah. The descendant is punished for "following in his father's evil way" by allowing the effects of his father's sin to influence his own behavior detrimentally, albeit to a smaller extent. (Although we have discussed only the effects of *Adam's* transgression on his descendants, the same applies to others. A father's level of respect or disregard for the Torah is passed on, in some measure, to his children.) Meanwhile, we must make an effort to take over the reins from the Evil Inclination to whatever extent we can, until the time when "Hashem will take the Evil Inclination and slaughter it before us!" (Sukah 52a)

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"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Tazria-Metzora

Learning A Lesson From G-d Through Punishment - A verse in our parsha says, "When you come to the Land of Canaan that I am giving you as an inheritance, and I will place a Tzaraas blemish on a house in the land of your inheritance..." [Vayikra 14:34]. Sometimes a person gets Tzaraas on his very own dwelling. There is a very famous comment by Rash"i on this verse, where he states in the name of the Medrash that the Torah is giving the Jewish people good news. What is the good news? The Emorites used to hide large amounts of gold, treasures of gold, in the walls of their houses. Blemishes would come on the houses, requiring the Jews to break down the walls, and as a result they would find the treasures. They would thereby come to easy wealth. There is a very strange aspect of this Medrash: Tzaraas comes for speaking Lashon Horah [gossip]. How can Tzaraas, which is a punishment, have such a 'rewarding' outcome? It doesn't make sense! Rav Bergman in his work Shaarei Orah interprets this Medrash, and provides us with a very fundamental insight. The Rambam writes at the end of Hilchos Tzaraas [16:10] "a sign and wondrous matter occurred in Israel to warn them against Lashon Horah, for one who spoke Lashon Horah had the walls of his house change in appearance; ... if he persists ... the leather utensils in his house change... if he persists further his clothing changes ... if he still persists his own skin changes..." What we see is that there is a progression of Tzaraas: first there was the type which affected the house, which was the initial warning, (the yellow light). If one didn't stop, it got a little closer -- it affected the clothes he wore on his body (the red light). If he still didn't stop speaking Lashon Horah, then the panic strobe light went off -- it affected his own body, necessitating the whole process of being sent outside the camp, being "excommunicated" as it were, etc., etc. Rav Bergman contrasts the Tochacha, the rebuke of the Jewish people, in Parshas Bechukotai (in Vayikra, Leviticus) -- which ends with consolation -- with the Tochacha in Parshas Ki Tavo (in Devarim, Deuteronomy), which although longer and more graphic, ends without any words of consolation. He explains that the Tochacha in Parshas Ki Tavo does not need a consolation; but the Tochacha in Parshas Bechukotai does. Why are they different? They are different because in Parshas Ki Tavo, G-d speaks in the first person ("I will punish you..."). It is clear that the punishment is coming directly from the Hand of G-d. However, the most prominent theme of the Tochacha in Parshas Bechukotai is the absence of Divine Providence ("And you walked with me in a manner of 'keri'; so too I will deal with you in a wrath of 'keri'" [Vayikra 26:27-28]), which means that the punishment was that G-d told them "You are on your own". To offer an example: there is one thing worse than being punished by one's father, and that is not having a father to administer punishment, or not having a father who cares enough about the child to punish him. When one has a father that worries and cares about a son enough to punish him when he is bad -- that itself is a consolation. Implicit in the punishment is a tremendous blessing -- there is somebody out there! Heaven forbid when one doesn't have a father -- or even worse -- when the father doesn't care to punish, but tells the child "you're on your own -- do whatever you want -- I don't care!" That is worse.

This is the distinction, Rav Bergman says, between Parshas Bechukotai and Parshas Ki Tavo. In the former G-d chastises Israel for attributing everything to chance, and says "I will show you what it is like to be without a G-d that is concerned." That is such a terrible punishment that the Tochacha needs to conclude with a consolation. But the rebuke of Ki Tavo, which is given in the language of "G-d will smite you...", as bad as that is -- it is at least apparent that it is He who personally is handing out the punishment. This has its own implicit consolation. What emerges is the following: when a person is aware that the purpose of a punishment is instructive -- it is not really a punishment. If I realize, if I am aware that I am doing something bad and G-d says "Stop", and the way he says it is by punishing me -- then it is no longer really a punishment. It is reassuring. I know that I have a Father who cares about me. When one speaks Lashon Horah and it affects the walls of his house, that is not a full punishment so much as a message of concern. Therefore if a person reacts to this message from G-d, all is as it should be. No real punishment has transpired here. In fact reward is in order. Everyone sins occasionally. Everyone has temporary lapses. If G-d sends an initial message and that suffices to correct one's lapses, then that is exactly what is supposed to be. Not only that, but the person is deserving of reward for listening to G-d. With this, Rav Bergman explains the Gemara in Sota [9b] "Samson went after his eyes, therefore the Philistines put out his eyes". The Sages record that Samson prayed to G-d "In exchange for one of my eyes I want to have the strength to bring the building down upon the Philistines, and in exchange for my other eye, I want to receive Olam HaBah, the World to Come". We can ask the same question which we asked concerning Tzaraas: Samson had sinned with his eyes, which is why he was punished. So why is he now asking for reward, based upon the loss of his eyes? The answer is once again that there is a kind of punishment, which if it is accepted and causes the person to react and learn a lesson from G-d, is considered something positive. By reacting the way he was supposed to react, Samson was able to turn the punishment into a vehicle of reward. The problem occurs when things happen to people and they do not react. We now can understand the Medrash in our Parsha. When a person speaks Lashon Horah, the first sign from G-d is "Look at the wall". If a person reacts at that point, realizes that he has spoken Lashon Horah, and decides to repent and take corrective action, if he goes to the Kohen at that point, shows him the wall of his house, and follows the prescribed ritual, then he is deserving of reward -- a treasure in his house. Reacting at the initial stage of suffering is a mitzvah which should be rewarded. But what happens if the person doesn't react and doesn't take the suffering as an instructive lesson from G-d? Then things get worse and worse. It affects one's clothes. And if he still doesn't react, it affects his own body. By then, it is strictly a punishment. This can be inferred from the language of the Torah, if we look closely. Concerning a blemish which strikes a house, the language of the Torah is that "He [the owner of the house] will come and declare to the Kohen" -- voluntarily [Vayikra 14:35]; but concerning a blemish on the skin the language is "and he is brought to the Kohen" -- against his will [13:9; 14:1]. Happy is the person who has the foresight and the insight, the perception and the honesty, to react in the correct fashion when something like this happens.

Jealousy, Lust, and Honor Take a Person Out of THIS World -

In this week's Haftorah we have the well-known story of Na-aman and Elisha. Na-aman was a Gentile king who was stricken with leprosy. He tried all types of doctors and all types of medicine and nothing helped. Finally, he heard about the "man of G-d" who lived in Israel, and he personally came to seek out Elisha and hear what he would tell him. He came with his entire entourage and stood outside the door of Elisha's tent. He thought that Elisha would be overwhelmed by the presence of a king, and would come out personally to greet him and bow down before him. Elisha, however, did not budge. He sent out a messenger to tell Na-aman that which he should do -- bathe in the Jordan River seven times. Na-aman took this as an affront, and in a huff and a puff he was about to leave, asking "aren't the rivers of Damascus superior to the waters of the Jordan?" Finally his servants managed to calm him down and convince him that he had nothing to lose by

trying this "cure". He did follow Elisha's instructions. He was cured and returned to Elisha on his hands and his knees, asking for forgiveness, proclaiming "The L-rd is G-d". [Melachim II 5:1-19] We can raise the following question: What was Na-aman's problem in the first place? He was the one with the problem. He was the one seeking the cure from Elisha, not the other way around. So why was he prepared to stand on his honor, and take issue with the fact that Elisha didn't show him the proper protocol? Let him swallow his pride and go for the cure! His own servants saw the lunacy of this attitude, but he could not see it! We see from here a point that should always be kept in mind: "Jealousy, lust, and honor drive a person from the world" [Avot 4:21]. Rav Leib Chassman says that the term "from the world" does not just mean Olam HaBah, the World-to-Come. It includes that, because if one lets his Jealousy, lust, and honor-seeking take hold of himself, he will lose Olam HaBah -- but it means this world as well. A person can become so crazy, so blinded, and so obsessed that he gives up this world. One can willingly give up his health for his honor. So powerful is the attraction of honor that it makes a person irrational. Any normal person would know, if he had leprosy, to do whatever a doctor ordered to find a cure. But one who is wrapped up in kavod, in his own honor, loses his perspective and gives up his life. That is why a person must learn Torah, because it saves a person from sin. That is why a person must have a teacher, dedicated friends, and a proper environment, so that when he does things that everybody else knows is crazy, at least he will have people who can attempt to guide him back to the proper path. But that is the last resort. The first line of defense is Torah study. May G-d save us from such craziness!

Sources and Personalities Rash"i -- (1040-1105) R. Shlomo ben Yitzchak; Troyes and Worms, France. Rav Bergman -- Contemporary, Bnei Brak, Israel. Ramba"m -- (1135-1204) R. Moshe ben Maimon; Spain, Egypt. Rav Leib Chassman -- (1869-1935) Mashgiach, Yeshivas Chevron, Israel. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by David Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@clark.net RavFrand, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org

dafyomi@jer1.co.il Insights into Daf Yomi from Ohr Somayach The Weekly Daf
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Thinking and Talking When is thinking considered the equivalent of talking and when not? One ramification of this question is what one may say on Shabbos. While it is forbidden by rabbinic law to hire workers on Shabbos to do work after Shabbos, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha rules that one may tell a fellow Jew that he would like him to come to see him when Shabbos is over. Although both people are completely aware that the purpose of that visit is hiring for work, it's permitted to think about work on Shabbos so long as no explicit mention is made of it. The rationale, says Rabbi Yochanan, is that the passage which is the basis for this rabbinical ban (Yishayah 58:13) directs us to honor Shabbos by refraining from doing our weekday activities and "saying things." This implies that speaking of weekday matters is forbidden, but not thinking about them. This raises the question of thinking as talking in other areas. It is forbidden to say or even think words of Torah or prayer in a bathroom or a bathhouse. But in the presence of undress, it is only forbidden to say such holy words while thinking them is permitted. In regard to the cleanliness of a place where Torah may be studied, our source is the Torah command in Devarim (23:14-15). There it states that a Jewish soldier must have a shovel included in his military pack so that he will be able to cover his waste with earth. This is necessary because Hashem is present in the Jewish camp and it must therefore be holy. No indication is made here that this is limited to the actual vocalization of Torah, explains Rashi, and the need for maintaining a clean camp is created by the fact that Jews are always thinking Torah thoughts. When it comes to undress, however, the command is to avoid Hashem seeing any unseemly davar, which means both "thing" and "statement." The ban on Torah in the presence of undress is therefore limited to speech, while thinking Torah is permissible. What about thinking the Shema or blessings instead of vocalizing them? In Mesechta Berachos (20b) there is a dispute between the Sages Ravina and Rabbi Chisda as to whether thinking is equivalent to talking. The ruling of the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 62:3) is that one does not fulfill any of these obligations by merely thinking the words. The Mishnah Berurah explains that this is the consensus of virtually all of the authorities except for Rambam, and one should therefore not rely on thinking his prayers without verbalizing them. Shabbos 150
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Shabbos 152b 1) ONLY HASHEM OPENS GRAVES The Gemara records a conversation between Rav Nachman and Rav Achai bar Yoshiah, who was speaking from the grave. When Rav Nachman reached into the grave and felt the body of Rav Achai and saw that his body had not deteriorated, he suggested that Rav Achai leave the grave and go home, since he was able to talk and move. Rav Achai responded that only Hashem can open graves, as it says, "You will know that I am G-d when I open your graves" (Yechezkal 37:13). It has been said that this Gemara explains a cryptic conversation that we find in Melachim II (4:18-23), in the story of the Shunamite woman whose son died and was revived by the prophet Elisha. When her husband returned from the fields, the woman did not tell him what had happened to their son. Rather, she said that she was going to the prophet. When her husband asked her why she was going to visit the prophet, all she said was, "Shalom." Why was she so secretive about the boy's death? Why did she refrain from telling her husband about it? The answer may be that if she would have told him, then the father would have become an Onen and would have been obligated to bury his son. Once the son was buried, the prophet would not have been able to revive him -- only Hashem can open graves, as our Gemara says. That is why she did not tell her husband that their son had died -- so that the father would not be obligated to bury him and the prophet would be able to revive him! ... 2) WHAT THE DEAD KNOW ...The Gemara in Berachos (18b) says that although the dead are not aware of what is happening in this world, they are aware of matters that pertain to themselves. When they are addressed, and questioned about their own matters, they can therefore hear the question and reply to it.

Shabbos 151 1) HALACHAH: MELACHAH DONE ON SHABBOS BY A GENTILE OPINIONS: If a gentile does Melachah on Shabbos for a Jew, may the Jew benefit from that Melachah, and when? ... HALACHAH: The SHULCHAN ARUCH (OC 325:14-15) rules like the RAN (b) that it is forever forbidden for the Jew for whom the Melachah was done only if it was done for him in public. If it was not done in public, then it is only forbidden (for everyone) to benefit from it until after Shabbos "b'Chedei she'Ya'asu." The TUR adds that if the Jew *asks* the gentile to do the Melachah for him, it is forbidden to that Jew forever. The MISHNAH BERURAH (325:74), however, is lenient on this matter and says that it is only forbidden until after Shabbos "b'Chedei she'Ya'asu." If the Melachah that the gentile did involved bringing an object from outside of the Techum (Shabbos boundary), then it is only forbidden for the person for whom it was brought, but everyone else may use it *immediately*, even on Shabbos.

151b POVERTY IS CYCLICAL AGADAH: The Gemara says that poverty is cyclical, striking everyone at some point. (a) The VILNA GA'ON finds an allusion to this in the beginning of Parshas Ki Sisa. The verse states, "v'Nasnu Ish Kofer Nafsho" -- "Every man shall give [a half-Shekel]..." (Shemos 30:12). The Hebrew word "v'Nasno" ("and he shall give") is a palindrome (a word that can be read the same in both directions, forward and backward). This demonstrates that giving Tzedakah can go both ways: Now, one might be giving the Tzedakah, but later, one might very well be receiving the Tzedakah. Furthermore, the cantillation marks above the word "v'Nasno" are "Kadma" and "Azla." The names of these cantillation marks literally mean "be early" ("Kadma") and "go" ("Azla"). This, too, alludes to the message of our Gemara, which tells a person to act soon and early and go give his money to Tzedakah while he still has it, *before* the time comes that he will have to take Tzedakah from others. (b) Others (see MAHARA MPANO) point out another allusion to this Gemara from the word "Tzedakah." When the letters that comprise the word "Tzedakah" are exchanged for their At-Bash equivalent (that is, the system of uncovering hidden meanings in the Torah by reversing the order of the alphabet, so that the letter "Alef" is exchanged for the letter "Tav," "Beis" for "Shin," "Gimel" for "Reish," and so on), the word Tzedakah itself is spelled out backwards! This shows that if a person gives Tzedakah when he is prospering, then when circumstances later become reversed and he is in need, Tzedakah comes back to him.

155b 2) THE DOG AND LASHON HA'RA Rav Papa said that there is no one poorer than the dog and no one richer than the swine. As Rashi explains, this refers to the ease with which those animals are able to find food. The VILNA GA'ON (Kol Eliyahu, Maseches Shabbos 155b) adds an allegorical explanation to this Gemara. The dog alludes to those who speak Lashon ha'Ra (see Makos 23a), since they bark senselessly like a dog and scare people with their mouths. The swine alludes to the prohibitions of forbidden foods. Rav Papa is saying that there is no prohibition poorer than Lashon ha'Ra, meaning that there is no prohibition which is neglected as much as Lashon ha'Ra (Bava Basra 165a). There is no one richer than the swine means that there is no prohibition that is observed as scrupulously as the prohibitions of forbidden foods. Even though both are of equal importance (and both are done with the mouth), nevertheless people respect one more than the other.

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HALAKHA - 20: Shaving in Honor of Shabbat During the Omer
YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VBM

On Yom Ha-zikkaron, we dedicate our shiurim to the memory of Israel's fallen soldiers and terror victims, including the twenty students of Yeshivat Har Etzion who fell in the line of duty. Yehi zikhram barukh.

"Shaving in Honor of Shabbat During the Omer"

Based on a shiur by Harav Aharon Lichtenstein Summarized by Yair Yaniv
Translated and adapted by Rav Eliezer Kwass

Our earliest sources make no mention of a ban on haircuts during Sefirat ha-Omer (the days between Pesach and Shavuot). The Ritz Giat, for example, refers only to marriage: "All of Israel is accustomed to not marry during Pesach and Shavuot. This is because of mourning, not because of any prohibition...[The mourning is restricted to not] marrying

("nisuin"), for the main joy is at the bridal canopy ("chuppa") and the marriage itself, but there is no restriction on "erusin" and "kiddushin" (legal engagement)... So ruled the Geonim." The custom to refrain from having a haircut ("tisporet") during the Omer appears in the Tur (OC 493); according to the Beit Yosef, its source is Rav Yehoshua ibn Shuib's "Derasha for the First Day of Pesach." In order to deal with our question, whether one can shave before Shabbat during this period, we must relate to three different issues: 1. Does "tisporet" including shaving, or just cutting the hair on one's head? 2. Is this custom part of the existing laws of mourning, and, if so, which stage of mourning? 3. Does the obligation of honoring Shabbat override the custom forbidding tisporet.

1. DEFINING "TISPORET" We find (Ta'anit 15b) a prohibition against "tisporet" in the rules for the participants in the ma'amad (shifts of Israelites who made a pilgrimage to the Temple to represent the nation during the communal sacrifices). Though the parameters of the prohibition are not stated here, some of the sources regarding laws of mourning relate directly to this issue. Masekhet Semachot (7:11) reads: "What is the rule of "tisporet?" Cutting all hair is forbidden - the head, the mustache, the beard and all other hair." In contrast, the gemara (Mo'ed Katan 24a) derives the prohibition from Vayikra 10:6: "You (Aharon and his remaining sons after the deaths of Nadav and Avihu) should not let your hair grow long [as normal mourners do]." Ostensibly this refers only to cutting the hair on the head.

The Rambam rules (Hilkhot Evel 5:2): "How do we know that a mourner is prohibited from 'tisporet?' The sons of Aharon were commanded "Do not let your hair grow long" - implying that any other mourner is prohibited from cutting his hair and must let it grow wild. Just as the mourner is prohibited from cutting the hair of his head, so too is he prohibited from cutting the hair of his beard and all other hair." The Rambam implies that the basic prohibition of hair-cutting only applies to the head, based on the verse, while shaving is merely an extension of that prohibition.

2. MOURNING DURING THE OMER Aside from the semantic question of defining the specific parameters of tisporet, we must discuss the nature of the custom of refraining from haircuts during the Omer. It is most likely not an independent one, but is rather part and parcel of the laws of mourning which are appropriate to this time period. There are different levels of mourning: the seven-day (shiva), thirty-day (sheloshim), and twelve-month periods. It seems obvious that the level of mourning in effect during the Omer is parallel to that of the twelve-month period, for all the prohibitions included in the custom - festive gatherings, marriage, and hair cutting - are those that extend beyond the thirty day period. On the other hand, none of the prohibitions that last only thirty days are included in the custom. During the twelve-month period, both getting a haircut and shaving are prohibited, but only "until one's friends scold him [to tell him that his hair is too long]" ("ad she- yig'aru bo chaveirav": Moed Katan 22b; Rambam Hilkhot Evel 6:3). Someone who goes a day or two without shaving would certainly deserve a reminder from his friends to shave. However, the Acharonim argue about whether one can cut his hair only when his friends ACTUALLY scold him, or when the TIME for scolding arrives, regardless of whether anyone did so. If we accepted the second opinion, there would be room to permit one who reached that stage - usually within a very few days, definitely after a week - to shave. The Ramban, in his extensive discussion in Torat Ha-adam about whether the laws of mourning are biblical or rabbinic in origin, proposes a distinction between different types of prohibitions. Those that bar the mourner from indulging in luxuries are Torah laws, while those that thrust upon him distinctly uncomfortable, substandard conditions are rabbinically mandated. So, for example, washing in hot water is considered a luxury and is biblically prohibited, but not washing at all causes discomfort and is rabbinically prohibited. It is possible, at least according to one opinion in the Rishonim, to infer that the same is true for "tisporet." The Rishonim debate whether a mourner can trim his mustache if it interferes with eating: The Ramban permits it even during the first

seven days of mourning, whereas the Ra'avad prohibits it all thirty days. The Ritz Giat (who is followed by the Shulchan Arukh YD 390:1) takes a middle approach; during the first seven days it is prohibited, but afterwards it is permitted. The Ramban and the Ra'avad are clear: they disagree whether the need for eating is a legitimate cause for permitting trimming one's mustache during mourning. The Ritz Giat's hybrid opinion, distinguishing between the seven-day and the thirty-day periods, needs explanation. He might, like the Ramban in Torat Ha-adam, distinguish between shiva, when discomfort is mandated, and sheloshim when only luxuries are prohibited. During the first seven days he must let his mustache grow even if it interferes with eating; afterwards only hair-cutting in general is prohibited, but not that which causes actual discomfort. One might apply the Ritz Giat's distinction to our issue and permit shaving without resorting to the rule of "ge'ara" (scolding). One who shaves regularly does not view his shaving as a luxury, to look his best; he feels uncomfortable and unkempt if he does not shave for a few days. Therefore, there is no reason to distinguish between trimming a mustache, the case he spoke about, and shaving a beard. We may distinguish, though, based on the Ramban, between haircuts, which are the basic prohibition, and the others, which are extensions thereof. When the Rishonim spoke about "giluach," they had trimming a beard in mind. Trimming a beard is similar to a haircut; it is done to look good, not to avoid looking ugly or feeling uncomfortable. Based on the Ritz Giat, it would be permitted to shave once every several days, for the mourning of the Omer is certainly not on the level of the shiva. If shaving, for a clean-shaven man, is analogous to trimming a mustache that gets in the way of eating, then even during "sheloshim" one could permit shaving every few days. This is certainly not the prevalent custom (although I know of a case where Ha-gaon Rav Moshe Soloveitchik z"tl ruled leniently - though I do not know what rationale he relied upon - that a lawyer could shave for his livelihood during sheloshim). With regards to the twelve-month period, though, which is less stringent, one could rely on this leniency.

3. SHAVING BEFORE SHABBAT The above two reasons, a) having reached the situation where people would tell the mourner to cut his hair and b) discomfort being a feature only of shiva and not of the periods which follow, permit shaving during the week, once every few days. Before Shabbat, though, there are additional reasons to be lenient maybe even to REQUIRE shaving for one who is accustomed to shave daily. Honoring ("kevod") Shabbat includes preparing oneself through washing and wearing clean clothing. Nowadays, for people who shave daily, shaving is a regular part of pre-Shabbat preparations. The gemara speaks of a case where a prohibition against shaving clashes with kevod Shabbat (Ta'anit 15b): "The men of the 'mishmar' (kohanim-priests on rotation for Temple service) and the men of the 'ma'amad' (as explained above) are forbidden to cut hair and to wash clothes, but on Thursday they are permitted because of kevod Shabbat." One might reject this source as irrelevant to our discussion by pointing out that the prohibition of hair cutting for the men of the mishmar and the ma'amad is not connected to mourning, but was made in order to insure that they shave earlier, similar to the prohibition of shaving during chol ha-mo'ed (Ta'anit 17a). The gemara on Ta'anit 26b, though, is certainly relevant: "During the week on which Tisha Be-av falls, it is prohibited to cut hair and to wash clothes, but it is permitted on Thursday for kevod Shabbat." The commentary ascribed to Rashi comments that if Tisha Be-av falls out on Shabbat one can wash on Thursday. Here, breaking mourning is explicitly permitted because of kevod Shabbat. Tosafot's position (Ta'anit 30a s.v. Ve-tarvayhu le-kula) is more extreme than Rashi's. They permit washing and cutting hair on Thursday even if Tisha Be-av comes out on Thursday - even though one could do all these preparations on erev Shabbat! Because of the "burden of Shabbat preparations one should not wait until erev Shabbat." Although the Beit Yosef was astounded by this radical opinion and therefore ascribed it to a mistaken student, the fact that the same comment appears in Tosafot Ha-rosh makes his doubts implausible. Even if one does

not go as far as the Tosafot, permitting mourning prohibitions on Tisha Be-av itself because of kevod Shabbat, there is certainly firm basis to permit shaving during the Omer because of kevod Shabbat. True, the Or Zarua writes that only washing clothes was permitted because of kevod Shabbat, but not cutting hair. However, the Magen Avraham explains that his reasoning is that one washes clothes every week but does not cut one's hair every week. If that is the case, then in a situation where one does shave every week, even the Or Zarua would permit shaving for kevod Shabbat. The mourning customs of the Omer are much more lenient than those of the week of Tisha Be-av.

SUMMARY: There are two reasons to permit those who shave daily to shave during the Omer on a normal weekday: 1. After several days one reaches the level of "ge'ara," where friends would scold him because he looks unpresentable (according to those who say that one does not have to actually be told by people). 2. The level of not shaving which causes discomfort and looks undignified is mandated only during shiva, but probably not during sheloshim and certainly not during the twelve-month period that the Omer parallels (Ritz Giat). Hence, since kevod Shabbat takes precedence over mourning customs of the Omer (based on Ta'anit 26b), it is not only permissible, but obligatory to shave before Shabbat.

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