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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON METZORA – Shabbos Hagadol - 5782

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subject: Rabbi Reisman's Weekly Chumash Shiur

Rabbi Reisman - Shabbos Hagadol - Parshas Metzora 5782

As we prepare for Pesach, Shabbos Parshas Metzora and Shabbos Hagadol the wonderful Shabbos that is now upon us.

4 - Topic – A Thought for the upcoming Chag Hamatzos which is an explanation of Sheishes Yemai Beraishis and Shivas Yemai Beraishis (A second approach).

(Ed. Note: Rabbi mentioned this Dvar Torah today which was said by Parshas Beraishis 5782 so I pasted it here).

At Kiddush, Jews the world over say (יום הששי ויכלו השמים) (והארץ, וכל-צבאם). That expression is a corruption of the Pesukim. As you all know, (יום הששי) is the end of 1:31 which states (ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר, יום הששי) and it is the end of the Parsha. The next Parsha starts 2:1 (ויכלו השמים והארץ), that begins to tell

the story of the 7th day. When we stand up in front of our families and proclaim (יום הששי ויכלו השמים והארץ) that is not correct. Imagine, if someone would get up and say in front of his Talmidim, he would be teaching them and he would get up and say Yom Hash'lishi Vayomer Elokim (יהיו למאורת ברקיע השמים). It was the third day and Hashem said let there be heavenly bodies, he would be teaching them incorrectly. It was the 4th day on which Hashem created the sun, the moon and the stars. It says in 1:13 (ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר, יום שלישי) and then in 1:14 (ויאמר אלקים, יהי מארת ברקיע השמים). For someone to get up and say (יום השלישי יהי מארת ברקיע השמים) would be terrible, it would be Megaleh Panim L'torah Shelo K'halacha. It would be teaching Torah incorrectly. So why do we get up and say (יום השלישי ויכלו השמים והארץ) as if it is one Posuk. It is a Davar Pele!

It is an even bigger Davar Pele because we are told by those who Darshun Simanim, that (יום הששי ויכלו השמים) is Roshei Teives Yud Kei Vav Kei. (יום) is (הששי) (י), (ויכלו) is (ה), (ה) is (ו) and (השמים) is (ה). So we are saying a Remez to Yud, Kei, Vav, Kei. What kind of Remez to Yud, Kei, Vav, Kei, the Yud & Kei is part of one Parsha of the Torah (יהי-ערב ויהי-בקר, יום הששי) and (ויכלו השמים) is a new Parsha. What is the inherent connection between them as that doesn't fill a Pshat at all?

While we are at it I would like to add a second point that needs explanation which I hope will be explained. I mentioned I believe in a past year (Ed. Note: see Parshas Yisro 5777 where Rabbi spoke out the Bais Halevi in the second piece in Beraishis starting with Vayichal) that sometimes we find that Chazal talk about Shiv'as Yemai Beraishis, the seven days of creation and sometimes Sheishes Yemai Beraishis, the six days of creation. Well is it six days or is it seven days. I understand the six days of the physical creation and Hashem created rest on the 7th day, however, it is interesting that Chazal use both expressions. Sheishes Yemai Beraishis and Shiv'as Yemai Beraishis. I would like to share with you a Yesod which I would hope would explain this.

Over the Yomim Tovim someone sent me a Sefer Chesed L'avraham which collects Divrei Torah from Gedolei Yisrael and in there on Parshas Beraishis on (יום הששי) these questions are not asked but there is a quote from the Amshinover Rebbe. The Amshinover Rebbe says on (יום הששי ויכלו השמים והארץ) that the Tachlis of a person in this world is L'hosif Min Hachol Al Hakodesh. The Tachlis of a person in the world, Hashem created a physical world for six days and then He created a day that has Kedusha, Kedushas Shabbos. We know that we have a Mitzvah of Tosafos Shabbos of adding some minutes or hours of Friday and making them be part of Shabbos. L'hosif Min Hachol Al Hakodesh. He says that is not just an incidental part of the Mitzvos of the Torah it is the Tachlis Habriya, the purpose of the Briya is that a person should come to this world and be Mosif M'chol Al Hakodesh, a person should add from

time that is not set aside for Kedusha, time that is Yemai Chol for ordinary things and take some of that time and set it aside for Kedusha, for Davening, for learning and for making it part of Shabbos.

The same thing with the physical things like money. Money is a mundane thing, it is a Davar Chol. When you use it for Kedusha, like Tzedaka, or use it to teach Torah, you use it for Chesed that is Mosif Hachol Al Hakodesh, you take from Chol and you pull it into Kodesh. When you are gifted, Hashem gave you a talent, you have an ability, you are a capable person. You can use it for manufacturing elevators or pocketbooks and that is fine, that is Chol. However, when you use your talents to help a Mosad, to help a Yeshiva, to help people who need help, individuals who need help, so then you are taking your Chol talents and you are using it for Kedusha, you are using it for a Davar Kadosh. Tachlis Ha'adam of the Briya is L'hosif Hachol Al Hakodesh.

We understand (יום הששי וְנִכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ). (יום הששי) is inherently Chol, but when it becomes Shabbos we say that we connect (יום הששי וְנִכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ). We connect the 6th day, the day of Chol and attach it to Shabbos to make it part of Kedushas Shabbos.

Chazal say that G-d's name is Yud, Kei, Vav, Kei – 4 letters. Shemos 17:16. Olam Hazeh when we don't see Kedusha, Hashem's name is just Yud and Hei. The Vav and Hei are hidden. (יום הששי) is an ordinary day. (יום הששי וְנִכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ) We connect the Yud, Kei to the Vav, Kei so then we take it and we are Mosif the Chol Al HaKodesh and make a whole thing. Yud, Kei always has Kedusha but now it has an extra level of Kedusha. Someone who is Mosif Mai'chol Al Hakodesh.

In the 5th Perek of Pirkei Avos we are taught (עשרה דברים נבראו) (בין השמשות) Halo Davar Hu, it is amazing. I once heard and I don't know if it is a Milsa D'biduchusa or a true Vort that every Erev Shabbos everybody is rushing. Why is everyone rushing? Because on the original Erev Shabbos Hashem went Bein Hash'moshos and told His Malachim hurry up we have 10 more things to create and it is only a few minutes until Shabbos and they created these last 10 things. (עשרה דברים נבראו בין) (השמשות) and these are some of the greatest things of Kedusha. The (פי הארץ), the (פי האתון), a Giluy of HKB"H's presence in this world and many other things were created (בין השמשות). Not Kavayochel that G-d was in a rush, but HKB"H made that the (בין השמשות), the connecting minutes of the 6th day to the 7th day are days of intense power of Briya, intense energy of creation. A person takes those minutes that connect Shabbos to Chol and he goes to Shul early and he is there ahead of time, and he is Mavir Sedra or he is learning, or he is helping set up the Shul for Shabbos. He is taking moments of Chol and making them Kodesh, that is the (בין השמשות) when a person can connect. So it is a beautiful idea (יום הששי וְנִכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם), we

declare that there are Sheishes Yemai Beraishis and Shiv'as Yemai Beraishis. We declare that we see Shiv'as Yemai Beraishis, we see the day of Kedusha as being part of the first six days of creation and we look to pull from Kedusha to Chol. We get caught up too much in our Chol.

(Ed. Note: Back to this week's Shiur). We now live in the time of the year where Shkiya is quite late 7:30'ish around here. There are times of the year that we are Mekabeil Shabbos at 4:30. Yet we rush until Shabbos. Why? There are some Shuls that have an early Shabbos and a Zman Shabbos. Why do Shuls have two Zemanim? I will tell you the top secret reason. The reason why Shuls do it is so that an Ehrliche Yid could take one Shabbos and say I want to do something special. I will go to Shul for the early Minyan and I am going to Daven Mincha and be Mekabeil Shabbos nice and early. After Kabbalas Shabbos I will go take a Sefer and I will go and learn and get ready for Shabbos for the hour and a quarter between Plag and Shkiya. Then I will join for Maariv. Therefore, I will be doing Kabbalas Shabbos early which is an ideal. I will be Davening Maariv after Shkiya which is an ideal and I will be able to Chap a' Rein some learning time in between. It is a wonderful idea and a great thing to try. Try it, you will like it and it will be fine. Don't worry. Tell your wife that I will be home at 8:15. I will Daven with a later Maariv but I will go to Shul for the early Mincha. Gevaldig! What an opportunity. It is an opportunity that presents itself when Shabbos is at this time of the year.

5 – Topic – Shabbos Hagadol

What is Shabbos Hagadol? The Michtav M'elياهو says Hagadol is a time of generosity. Gadol is Chessed. Shabbos Hagadol – it is the Shabbos before Pesach it is the Shabbos of kindness, of generosity. (לך ר' הגדולה). (גדולה) is Chessed. (הגדולה) (והגבורה והמפארת). We know the first Simanim of the Sefira are Chessed, Gevurah and Tiferes. So Chessed is Gedulah.

Rashi in Vaeschanan 3:24 on (את-גדולה) says (זו מדת טובך). Gadol is generous. But that is the way it is by Klal Yisrael. Comes Shabbos Hagadol the generosity of Klal Yisrael in helping other Jews being able to afford a proper Pesach. Things are so expensive today. To be able to come up with a financial help for people, to help them make a Bakavadika Yom Tov. Yidden are so kind and so generous, I am sure that you are one of them. Make sure that you are one of them. Let it truly be a Shabbos Hagadol. Wishing one and all an absolutely constructive lead up to Pesach. Hope you are able to rid your homes of all types of Chometz. Chometz She'babayis, Chometz She'baleiv. We should elevate ourselves this Chodesh Nissan to become bigger, better and IY"H closer to HKB"H. A Gutten Shabbos to all!

Excerpted from
CONGREGATION BETH ABRAHAM Bergenfield, NJ
PESACH BULLETIN 5782/2022

Rav Ya'akov Neuburger, Rabbi Rav Tanchum Cohen,
Assistant Rabbi Rav Moshe Tvzi Weinberg, Mashpia

KASHERING: WHERE TO START

1. Clean the oven, range, sink and counter tops. Do not use them with anything hot for 24 hours. Clear all kitchen surfaces. One may want to kasher the oven first.
 2. Turn on one burner to its highest setting for ten minutes covering it with a chometzdik blech or pot. Repeat for all burners.
 3. If there are pans under the burner grates, remove one and cover it with foil, or replace it with a pesachdik pan. If there are no removable pans under the grates simply cover the area with foil. Keeping the foil a safe distance from the fire, with a pesachdik pot on the one prepared burner boil up water. With this water, one can kasher all other parts of the range, including the pans under the other grates. Have a lot of towels ready to limit the mess.
 4. Finally kasher the area under the first burner by boiling water on another burner after the area underneath has been kashered.
 5. Now one can proceed to kasher the counters and the sink.
 6. I have found that it is easiest to use a pesachdike electric kettle to boil water to kasher all surfaces and the sink, as well as the range as described above
- [See below - more detailed sections]

FURTHER KITCHEN PREPARATIONS:

1. Baby Bottles – New ones should be purchased as they come into contact with Chometz.
2. Baby high chair - Clean thoroughly. In addition, it is preferable to cover the tray with contact paper or to kasher the tray by pouring boiling water over it (after no hot food had contact with the tray for 24 hrs.), and to avoid placing regular pesachdike dishes on the tray.
3. Towels and tablecloths - Launder them with soap and hot water with fabrics: Towels, Aprons, Tablecloths: Launder them with detergent in a washing machine on the 'hot' setting. Please check each item that no pieces of food remain attached.
4. Water coolers - Replace with a new water bottle. Cold water coolers should be cleaned thoroughly. To kasher the hot tap, run hot water through the tap for ten seconds and pour boiling water from a kettle over the hot water tap.
5. Metal water urns - If they are only used for water, one should kasher the outside by pouring hot water over it. The plastic bottom should be covered with aluminum foil.
6. Crockpots, corning ware, barbecue grills, George Foreman grills, melmac, plastic, silverstone, stoneware, teflon, toasters, toaster ovens and warming ovens and drawers all cannot be kashered.

Remember, when shopping for Pesach, please be mindful that sometimes items are misplaced by employees or shoppers. It is

wise to always check the item being purchased for the required supervision.

ALL KASHERING MUST BE COMPLETED BY FRIDAY
APRIL 15th BY 11:50AM

II. Going away for Pesach

If you will be leaving your home shortly before Pesach and will be away for all of Pesach, you may choose to do the Bedika in your Pesach place and sublet your entire home to our non-Jew for all of Pesach.

If you choose to do so please read the instructions that pertain to you in the next section regarding the sale of Chometz. You need not do any kashering or cleaning or Bedika at all in your home. You will be allowed to access your home very briefly for mail or items that you may have forgotten.

If you are travelling away and have been asked to host a guest during the yom tov, the house must be readied for Pesach. That means that you do not have to kasher anything. Rather you can cover a table and place some water and minimal kosher lepesach items and disposable cups and plates there for your guest's convenience. However Bedika must be done throughout the house, and the closets that have Chometz have to be marked and taped down. This can be done by the guests, the night before Pesach or by their hosts in the neighborhood.

In the event that one's home can be divided into an area for the guests and a separate section or sections, those sections can be sublet to the Gentile if they represent a reasonable lease, i.e. someone would indeed lease those areas alone. In that case alone, one would not be obligated to prepare the leased areas for Pesach and one need not do Bedika there, and that section would be off limits to your guests.

III. Selling the Chometz

Together with these pages is the Power of Attorney form which empowers Rabbi Neuburger and Rabbi Cohen to sell your Chometz or sublet your home on your behalf. Additional copies are available in the shul.

1. Please fill in the document carefully, listing the approximate values for the various categories of Chometz, whenever possible. If uncertain of the value, please overestimate. Please list your office(s) as well.

2. Only Chometz items which contain Chometz, or items which may contain Chometz can be sold. (Selling the Chometz can be used as a tool to avoid researching items as to their contents and edibility.) However, dishes should not be included and any item which clearly does not contain grain or grain derivatives should not be included.

3. Although our sale works for all forms of Chometz, some have a family custom or have personally adopted a custom not to sell rund Chometz and instead to give it away, eat it or burn it. Rund Chometz is something which is primarily

unquestionable and edible Chometz; this category includes bread, cake, oat or wheat cereal, cookies, pretzels, and rolled oats. Many opinions include beer and whiskey in this category as well. Here is a partial list of frequently asked items that can be sold even according to the stricter opinions: baker's yeast, baking powder, baking soda, pearled barley, corn flakes, duck sauce, flour, ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, pasta sauce, popcorn, potato chips, pickles, rum, vanilla extract, vinegar.

4. The non-Jewish purchaser of the Chometz must have access to your home during Pesach. If you plan to be away during Pesach, please leave a key with a neighbor. On the Power of Attorney document you will note either this neighbor's phone number or your own cell phone number.

5. Those of you who will not be home and are leaving it vacant during the entire Pesach and wish to sublet the entire home in order to be free of the

obligation to clean and be Bodek your home, may do so provided the you fulfil the Mitzva of Bedikas Chometz at some other place. Please be sure to complete and return the document to the Rabbi by THURSDAY Morning, April 14th, and be out of your home, preferably, before 7:35pm that evening. In this situation one should perform the mitzvah of Bedikas Chometz in the place where one is staying for Pesach. There may be extenuating circumstances where one cannot leave one's home before Sunday evening or where one cannot perform a bedikah on Sunday night at one's destination. In those situations we will sublet the entire home to the Gentile and exclude one room from the sublease (as indicated in the "Power of Attorney") in which you can perform the mitzvah of bedikas Chometz.

7. The form must be signed by the legal renter/owner and by the legal owner of the Chometz. When these are NOT the same person, both people should be involved in delegating the power of the attorney to the Rabbi and should consult with him.

8. All forms must be completed by personally appointing the Rabbi as your agent. If one is traveling away before Thursday April 14th and is doing bedika at home or in the office prior to that, the beracha is omitted.

IV. Erev Pesach: Thursday Night, April 14th and Friday, April 15th

1. Bedikas Chometz: The search for the Chometz should be done Thursday night, April 14th as soon as possible after 8:17pm, before eating dinner or beginning any other work. The search commences with the blessing that can be found at the beginning of most Hagadot. After completing the search one recites Bitul Chometz, a formula annulling and dispossessing and Chometz of which one is unaware. This Formula should be recited in English, as well if one does not understand Hebrew.

2. Taanis Bechorim - Fast of the First Born takes place this year on Friday April 15. Participating in a seudas mitzvah exempts one in this case from fasting the entire day. Shacharis at ___

___ and __. The shul will be making a seudas mitzvah following each siyum to which you are all invited. Please come.

3. The prohibition of eating Chometz begins on Friday morning, April 15th at 10:43am.

4. Biur Chometz: The burning of the Chometz must be done by 11:50am on Friday morning. From that time on Chometz may no longer remain in your possession. Therefore, following the burning of the Chometz a final "bitul" formula is recited. The formula can be found in most hagados or in a machzor.

REMINDER: ALL KASHERING SHOULD BE COMPLETED AT THIS TIME AS WELL.

5. Melacha Achar Chatzos -Following Chatzos (12:56pm), we should refrain from any work that is prohibited on chol hamoed. Ideally, one should complete all haircuts and shaving before תוצה as well.

V. SEDER PREPARATIONS

CHECKING ROMAINE LETTUCE

Since Romaine lettuce grows open it is prone to insect infestation throughout the head. Small black or green aphids and thrips are commonly found and well camouflaged. Occasionally narrow translucent burrows speckled with black dots are home to worms. Here are step-by-step recommendations for checking the lettuce leaves:

1. Cut off the lettuce base and separate the leaves from one another.

2. Spread each leaf, exposing its curls and crevices, and wash the open leaf under high-pressure running water. Alternatively, a vegetable brush may be used on both sides of the leaf.

3. Check both sides of the leaf against a good source of overhead lighting or on a light box.

CHECKING MATZOS

An important pre-Pesach preparation is to inspect any hand baked matzos that you may have purchased. Any matzos that are curled over such that the top and bottom adhere to each, other should be taken from the box. The curled area should be removed along with an extra inch and should be treated as Chometz. The rest of the vmn can be replaced in the box and enjoyed over Pesach.

It is advisable for women to omit the shehechianu beracha while candle lighting and fulfill it at kiddush.

MEDICATIONS ON Pesach

Harav Schachter Shlit"a has ruled that medications (IN PILL FORM ONLY) that are tasteless can be taken on Pesach (they are considered inedible for canines) One need not research the potential of kitniyos or Chometz

Regarding other medications please read the below carefully.

Any change in medication due to Pesach, even if they contain Chometz, should not be undertaken without consulting with one's physician and the Rav.

- One who is ill may have medication which contains kitniyos.
- Please check to see if the medicine in question appears on the lists that the Star - K/Kollel of Los Angeles publishes. The list will be available in shul and Rav Neuberger and Rav Cohen will have a copy as well.

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If the medication does not appear on the list one can call the Baltimore Va'adat 401-484-4110.

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If no information is available, please call the manufacturer and make sure you get the name of the person you are speaking with, inquire whether there is any grain product involved in any stage of the processing (or any animal derivative - while you are at it). Explain that we need to know with the same degree of concern as for a person with wheat allergies.

- If the medication is reported to contain Chometz or there is some possible grain product in the medication, together with one's physician, pharmacist and the list one can try to identify and procure a replacement medication. If no reasonable replacement available, or if there is no information available, please consult the Rav.

IX. Food Items

OU ALERT: Due to the increasingly common use of Pesach-questionable processing used in the manufacture of sugar the OU is now recommending either to purchase Pesach certified brands or to purchase your Non-Pesach certified sugar before the holiday begins.

- Aluminum foil Products: All disposable foil products do not require Passover supervision.
- Baby Cereal: Powdered rice cereal should be considered Chometz as they are probably produced on Chometz equipment.
- Baby food: Needs to be kosher l'pesach as it may be produced on Chometz equipment. gerber 2nd foods - (4oz Glass Jars Only)
- Baby formula: Enfamil, Similac, Isomil and Prosobee as well as many others may be used on Pesach. They should be purchased before Pesach and should be used with separate dishes as they contain kitniyos.
- Balloons: Balloons may have a powdered coating on the inside and should not be blown up by mouth on Pesach. (Star-K)
- Canned fruits and vegetables: Should carry a kosher l'pesach endorsement.
- Dried fruits: Dried fruits require Pesach certification finger paint: Elmer's and Ross Finger Paints contain wheat starch and should be put away for Pesach.
- Carrots that are certified Kosher are kosher l'pesach as well, even without "P" designation.
- Coffee: All coffees require Pesach certification. The

following packaged coffees are Kosher for Pesach without a Pesach symbol. (Partial Listing). Folgers: Instant, Regular, Decaffeinated, Unflavored Nescafe Tasters Choice: Instant, Regular, Unflavored.

– Cleansers: The following is a partial list that do not require a hashgocho on Pesach even if used to clean eating surfaces: Ajax, Cascade, Cheer, Clorox, Dawn, Dynamo, Glass Plus, Ivory, Joy, Mr. Clean, Murphy Oil, Palmolive, Soft Scrub, Spic 'n Span and Tide.

– Frozen fruits: All frozen unsweetened whole fruit without syrup or other additives listed do not require special Pesach supervision.

– Hand Sanitizer: Any without alcohol may be used.

– Ice: All plain water bagged ice may be used.

– Insect and Rodent Traps: May contain Chometz bait which is non-toxic to people and should be sold with the Chometz. This includes Combat Roach System, D-Con Rat & Mouse baits and Black Flag Roach Ender. Raid Ant & Roach Traps do not contain Chometz. All insecticide sprays may be used. (Star-K)

– Juices: Unsweetened "Grade A" concentrated frozen orange and grapefruit juice without any additives may be used on Pesach.

– Lactaid Caplets: May contain Chometz and may not be used on Pesach. Lactaid Milk: May be used on Pesach if purchased from a store with supervision before Pesach.

– Play Dough: As it may contain Chometz, it should be sold with the Chometz.

– Milk: Should have kosher for Pesach certification to avoid milk processed on the same equipment as Chometz items.

– Nuts (almonds, filberts, walnuts): Raw whole, chopped or ground nuts without preservatives or other additives are approved for Pesach.

– Paper towel rolls: The first three full size sheets and the last full size sheet attached to the cardboard should not come into direct contact with food.

– Plastic disposables: Plastic cups, plates and cutlery may be used without Pesach hechsher.

– Quinoa: Can be used, if needed, with kosher for Pesach certification.

– Salt: All non-iodized salt that does not contain dextrose or polysorbates may be used.

– Seltzer, unflavored: Do not require a special Pesach hashgocho

– Spices: Due to recent changes in the spice industry, pure spices require reliable kosher for Pesach certification.

– Sugar: Brown sugar often shares tanks with items that contain Chometz and therefore requires Pesach supervision.

– Tea Bags: Any unflavored and non-herbal tea does not require

– Tea (Herbal): Requires kosher l'pesach indication.

– Vegetables, frozen: Should carry kosher l'pesach indications,

as companies sometimes produce vegetable - pasta salads on the same equipment.

– Water: Any spring water that has no additives at all may be used on Pesach .

I. Kashering for Pesach

Kashering ovens/stoves - Before kashering all ovens and cooktop parts, they should be cleaned thoroughly and not be used for 24 hours. Stains that are baked into the surfaces of the oven and resist repeated scrubbing with caustic cleansers can be disregarded.

1. Conventional Ovens: The oven should then be set to the highest temperature for forty minutes. It is preferable to insert a pan of water into the oven for the first few minutes giving it enough time to create some vapor.

2. The racks, as they can rarely be thoroughly cleaned, should either be cleaned in a self- cleaning oven or covered with foil (punching holes through it to allow the air to circulate).

3. This method will not kasher trays in the broiler compartment in the oven. If one does not intend to use the broiler on Pesach, one should thoroughly clean the broiler but there is no need to kasher it. If one intends to use the broiler one should replace the broiler pans with new pesachdik pans and kasher the empty broiler cavity by setting it to broil for forty minutes. Again, it is preferable to insert a pan of water into the oven for the first few minutes - giving it enough time to create some vapor.

4. Self-cleaning ovens can be kashered by removing all visible pieces of food and running it through the shortest self-cleaning cycle with the racks in place. Self cleaning ovens and that which is kashered inside of them or kashered by direct fire do NOT need the 24 hour period of non-use.

5. Continuously cleaning ovens should be treated as regular ovens. However, they have to be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturer's specification which often preclude caustic or abrasive materials.

6. Gas Cooktop: The grates of the burners should be kashered by putting them in contact with the flame for at least 10 minutes. This can easily be done by putting the Shabbos blech over the grates and turning the burners on. (The regular year-long blech can be used for this. Care must be taken not to create too much heat under the blech, which could harm the stove or counter. It is advisable to do one burner at a time.) Alternatively, the grates can be burned out in the stove at 550 degrees for one hour . If there is a pan underneath, the grate should be purged by pouring hot water over it. The stove top should be covered with heavy aluminum foil. (If it is stainless steel it can be purged with hot water .)

7. Electric Cooktop: In a conventional electric cooktop, clean the burners and turn them on to a high heat setting until they are completely glowing, which may take just a few minutes. If there is a pan underneath, the grate should be purged by

pouring hot water over it. The stove top should be covered with heavy aluminum foil. (If it is stainless steel it can be purged with hot water.) If there is a pan underneath, the grate should be purged by pouring hot water over it. The stove top should be covered with heavy aluminum foil. (If it is stainless steel it can be purged with hot water.)

8. glass, corning, halogen, or ceran range tops present difficulty. The electric elements of these stove tops can be kashered by turning them on to their highest setting until they come to a glow. However, the unheated area of the glass top cannot be kashered satisfactorily without risking damage to it. One should call the manufacturer of the model and find out which materials can be safely placed over the glass top area between the burners, and how they can be situated safely .

9. Microwave oven: Microwave ovens that have been used for cooking should not be used and thus should not be koshered for pesach. If they have been solely used to warm and defrost food, and if it is important to use them on pesach, then they must be cleaned very well with special attention to the grate over the light. They should not be used for 24 hours. The glass turntable should be removed and replaced with a new surface. A Styrofoam cup, filled with water, should be brought to boil, allowing some steam to gather. The cup should be refilled and moved to another spot and once again bring the water to a boil allowing some steam to gather. The glass window should be covered with a stiff paper or light cardboard.

10. W arming Drawers: Even if they are reconfigured or designed to permit usage on Shabbos and yom tov, they cannot be easily koshered in a non commercial setting and should not be used on pesach.

KASHERING SINKS

1. Enamel, china, porcelain or corian sinks: As they cannot be kashered, the sink and faucets should be cleaned thoroughly and not used with hot items for 24 hours. One should place pesachdik racks and tubs (separate for milk and meat) or some similar inserts inside the sinks.

2. Stainless steel or granite sinks: The sink and metal faucets should be cleaned thoroughly and not used with anything hot for 24 hours. The difficulty of controlling this suggests that the sink not be used at all or that the hot water be disabled for the twenty four hour period. Boiling hot water should be poured over every part of the sink. This water should be boiled in a pesachdik kettle or a kettle that itself has been kashered. The kettle will have to be filled several times to complete the kashering.

KASHERING METAL UTENSILS (e.g., kiddush cups)

1. Metal utensils that have not been used in baking or grilling or frying Chometz may be kashered if they are made of one piece and do not contain any deep nooks or rolled lips that that could harbor waste. The utensils should be cleaned thoroughly, allowing 24 hours without contact to anything hot. Then they

should be immersed, one by one, into a pot of water that is maintaining a rolling boil through out the immersion.

2. The custom has been established to kasher a pot before using it for kashering other utensils. This is accomplished through selecting a large pot with a smooth inner surface, cleaning it and leaving it dormant for twenty-four hours. The water in the pot should then be brought to a boil. Proceed to have the water boil over the sides of the pot, either by adding boiling water carefully or by dropping a hot nail into the boiling water. The water should then be discarded and refilled and brought to a boil to begin kashering.

KASHERING COUNTER TOPS

1. Move Tables: The common practice is to clean tables well and then cover them to the FURTHER KITCHEN PREPARATIONS section.

2. It has long been practiced to cover enamel, corian, plastic and formica counter tops that will be used over the course of Pesach.

3. Fabrics: Towels, Aprons, Tablecloths: Launder them with detergent in a washing machine on the 'hot' setting. Please check each item that no pieces of food remain attached.

4. These counters (enamel, corian, plastic/formica) should be clean and unused with anything hot for twenty four hours and covered with a surface that will not allow moisture through.

5. Granite, marble and other solid stone surfaces (non composite stone) can be kashered and used without any cover. Cracks or seams should be covered well.

6. The kashering should be done after the counter has not been used for anything hot for at least twenty four hours.

7. Boiling water should be generously applied to the surface.

8. Alternatively, these counters alone (Granite, marble and other solid stone), can be kashered with a steamer. The mouth of the steamer wand must be held within $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch of the counter surface. Every area must be steamed twice. The second time must be done momentarily after the first while the counter is still very wet from the first application. Whereas steaming is neater, it is very laborious and requires care and patience.

[More excerpts from Beth Abraham Pesach bulletin (e.g. Seder) will be in the Pesach issue IYH.re Seder eTo be continued next week.]

From: Rabbi Sacks <info@rabbisacks.org>

subject: Covenant and Conversation

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

The Power of Shame - METZORA • 5776, 5782

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Zt"l

On 20 December 2013, a young woman named Justine Sacco was waiting in Heathrow airport before boarding a flight to Africa. To while away the time, she sent a tweet in questionable taste about the hazards of catching AIDS. There was no

immediate response, and she boarded the plane unaware of the storm that was about to break. Eleven hours later, upon landing, she discovered that she had become an international cause célèbre. Her tweet, and responses to it, had gone viral. Over the next 11 days she would be googled more than a million times. She was branded a racist and dismissed from her job. Overnight she had become a pariah.[1]

The new social media have brought about a return to an ancient phenomenon, public shaming. Two recent books – Jon Ronson's *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* and Jennifer Jacquet's *Is Shame Necessary?*[2] – have discussed it. Jacquet believes it is a good thing. It can be a way of getting public corporations to behave more responsibly, for example. Ronson highlights the dangers. It is one thing to be shamed by the community of which you are a part, quite another by a global network of strangers who know nothing about you or the context in which your act took place. That is more like a lynch mob than the pursuit of justice.

Either way, this gives us a way of understanding the otherwise bewildering phenomenon of tsara'at, the condition dealt with at length in last week's parsha and this one. Tsara'at has been variously translated as leprosy, skin disease, and scaly infection. Yet there are formidable problems in identifying it with any known disease. First, its symptoms do not correspond to Hansen's Disease, otherwise known as leprosy. Second, the tsara'at described in the Torah affects not only human beings but also the walls of houses, furniture, and clothes. There is no known medical condition that has this property.

Besides, the Torah is a book about holiness and correct conduct. It is not a medical text. Even if it were, as David Zvi Hoffman points out in his commentary,[3] the procedures to be carried out do not correspond to those that would be done if tsara'at were a contagious disease. Finally, tsara'at as described in the Torah is a condition that brings not sickness but rather impurity, tumah. Health and purity are different things altogether.

The Sages decoded the mystery by relating our parsha to the instances in the Torah in which someone was actually afflicted by tsara'at. It happened to Miriam when she spoke against her brother Moses (Num. 12:1-15). Another example referred to was Moses who, at the Burning Bush, said to God that the Israelites would not believe in him. His hand briefly turned "as leprous as snow" (Ex. 4:7). The Sages regarded tsara'at as a punishment for lashon hara, evil speech, speaking negatively about or denigrating another person.

This helped them explain why the symptoms of tsara'at – mould, discolouration – could affect walls, furniture, clothes, and human skin. These were a sequence of warnings or punishments. First God warned the offender by sending a sign of decay to the walls of his house. If the offender repented the

condition stopped there. If he failed to do so his furniture was affected, then his clothes, and finally his skin.

How are we to understand this? Why was “evil speech” regarded as so serious an offence that it took these strange phenomena to point to its existence? And why was it punished this way and not another?

It was the anthropologist Ruth Benedict and her book about Japanese culture, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*,^[4] that popularised a distinction between two kinds of society: guilt cultures and shame cultures. Ancient Greece, like Japan, was a shame culture. Judaism and the religions influenced by it (most obviously, Calvinism) were guilt cultures. The differences between them are substantial.

In shame cultures, what matters is the judgment of others. Acting morally means conforming to public roles, rules, and expectations. You do what other people expect you to do. You follow society’s conventions. If you fail to do so, society punishes you by subjecting you to shame, ridicule, disapproval, humiliation, and ostracism. In guilt cultures what matters is not what other people think but what the voice of conscience tells you. Living morally means acting in accordance with internalised moral imperatives: “You shall” and “You shall not.” What matters is what you know to be right and wrong. People in shame cultures are other-directed. They care about how they appear in the eyes of others, or as we would say today, they care about their “image.” People in guilt cultures are inner-directed. They care about what they know about themselves in moments of absolute honesty. Even if your public image is undamaged, if you know you have done wrong it will make you feel uneasy. You will wake up at night, troubled. “O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!” says Shakespeare’s Richard III. “My conscience hath a thousand several tongues / And every tongue brings in a several tale / And every tale condemns me for a villain.” Shame is public humiliation. Guilt is inner torment.

The emergence of a guilt culture in Judaism flowed from its understanding of the relationship between God and humankind. In Judaism we are not actors on a stage with society as the audience and the judge. We can fool society; we cannot fool God. All pretence and pride, every mask and persona, the cosmetic cultivation of public image are irrelevant: “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). Shame cultures are collective and conformist. By contrast Judaism, the archetypal guilt culture, emphasises the individual and their relationship with God. What matters is not whether we conform to the culture of the age but whether we do what is good, just, and right.

This makes the law of *tsara’at* fascinating, because according to the Sages’ interpretation, it constitutes one of the rare instances in the Torah of punishment by shame rather than guilt. The

appearance of mould or discolouration on the walls of a house was a public signal of private wrongdoing. It was a way of saying to everyone who lived or visited there, “Bad things have been said in this place.” Little by little the signals came ever closer to the culprit, appearing next on their bed or chair, then on their clothes, then on their skin, until eventually their found themselves diagnosed as defiled:

And a blighted person, one bearing the disease – their clothing shall be torn, and the hair of their head disarrayed. And they shall cover their upper lips as they cry out, ‘Impure! Impure!’ They shall be in a state of impurity for as long as they have the disease; they are impure. They shall live apart; outside the camp shall be their dwelling. (Lev. 13:45-46)

These are quintessential expressions of shame. First is the stigma: the public marks of disgrace or dishonour (the torn clothes, unkempt hair). Then comes the ostracism: temporary exclusion from the normal affairs of society. These have nothing to do with illness and everything to do with social disapproval. This is what makes the law of *tsara’at* so hard to understand at first: it is one of the rare appearances of public shaming in a non-shame, guilt-based culture.^[5] It happened, though, not because society had expressed its disapproval but because God was signalling that it should do so.

Why specifically in the case of *lashon hara*, “evil speech”? Because speech is what holds society together. Anthropologists have argued that language evolved among humans precisely in order to strengthen the bonds between them so that they could co-operate in larger groupings than any other animal. What sustains co-operation is trust. This allows and encourages me to make sacrifices for the group, knowing that others can be relied on to do likewise. This is precisely why *lashon hara* is so destructive. It undermines trust. It makes people suspicious about one another. It weakens the bonds that hold the group together. If unchecked, *lashon hara* will destroy any group it attacks: a family, a team, a community, even a nation. Hence its uniquely malicious character: It uses the power of language to weaken the very thing language was brought into being to create, namely, the trust that sustains the social bond.

That is why the punishment for *lashon hara* was to be temporarily excluded from society by public exposure (the signs that appear on walls, furniture, clothes, and skin), stigmatisation and shame (the torn clothes, etc.) and ostracism (being forced to live outside the camp). It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to punish the malicious gossiper using the normal conventions of law, courts, and the establishment of guilt. This can be done in the case of *motsi shem ra*, libel or slander, because these are all cases of making a false statement. *Lashon hara* is more subtle. It is done not by falsehood but by insinuation. There are many ways of harming a person’s reputation without actually telling a lie. Someone accused of *lashon hara* can easily say, “I didn’t say it, I didn’t mean it, and

even if I did, I did not say anything that was untrue.” The best way of dealing with people who poison relationships without actually uttering falsehoods is by naming, shaming, and shunning them.

That, according to the Sages, is what tsara’at miraculously did in ancient times. It no longer exists in the form described in the Torah. But the use of the Internet and social media as instruments of public shaming illustrates both the power and the danger of a culture of shame. Only rarely does the Torah invoke it, and in the case of the metzora only by an act of God, not society. Yet the moral of the metzora remains. Malicious gossip, lashon hara, undermines relationships, erodes the social bond, and damages trust. It deserves to be exposed and shamed. Never speak ill of others, and stay far from those who do.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: Rabbi Yochanan Zweig genesis@torah.org to: rabbizweig@torah.org subject: Rabbi Zweig

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week’s Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Yaakov Dovid ben Nochum Binyamin, Professor Bierman. “May his Neshama have an Aliya!”

.. Follow the Leader

And Bnei Yisroel went and did as Hashem had commanded Moshe and Aharon, so they did (Shemos 12:28).

This week is known as Shabbos Hagadol. According to Chazal, this was the Shabbos that Bnei Yisroel set aside a lamb to be brought as a Korban Pesach.

Rashi (ad loc) is bothered by the seemingly repetitious conclusion of the possuk. In other words, the beginning of the verse clearly states that Bnei Yisroel did as Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon, therefore why did the Torah find it necessary to conclude with the words “so they did”? Rashi goes on to explain that the words “so they did” is referring to Moshe and Aharon; they too did the mitzvah of Korban Pesach.

Maharal in the Gur Aryeh (Shemos 12:28) wonders; why is it assumed that Moshe and Aharon would not have had to bring a Korban Pesach and thus the Torah had to tell us otherwise? Additionally, if the Torah meant to tell us that “so they did” is referring to Moshe and Aharon, why doesn’t the it expressly state such, leaving no room for confusion?

Very often, when telling our children to do something that we feel will improve their lives greatly (e.g. they should commit to studying Torah an hour a night), they silently wonder (and sometimes not so silently) why we ourselves are not modeling that very same behavior?

Of course they don’t realize all the obligations that we are under (work, business meetings, school board meetings, home repairs, etc.), so how can they possibly understand why we aren’t able to make that very same commitment to Torah study?

In fact, our kids are actually right. Of course, there are myriads of excuses we can make as to why we ourselves don’t do what we are asking our kids to do, but that’s exactly what they are – excuses. Of course, when one has many responsibilities there are conflicts that cannot be avoided. But our children aren’t fooled, they know when we are serious about an ideal and when we are merely paying lip service to an ideal. Our kids also know that we have unavoidable conflicts, but they will absolutely judge what we consider to be important in our lives by how we choose to spend our free time.

Leadership follows some of the same rules. Obviously a leader has many responsibilities and obligations, after all, that is what leadership is all about – taking responsibility to get things done. Yet some leaders see themselves as above following certain laws that everyone else must adhere to. They forget that they too have a responsibility to follow the rules.

The Torah is teaching us a remarkable lesson about what kind of leaders Moshe and Aharon were. On the night that Bnei Yisroel left Egypt, undoubtedly, there were a multitude of things to do and Moshe and Aharon could easily have been forgiven for not fulfilling the mitzvah of Korban Pesach. But that’s not the type of leaders they were – they did exactly what everyone else did. That’s what the Torah is telling us by not mentioning their names: They fulfilled the Korban Pesach like everyone else – as ordinary members of Bnei Yisroel about to leave Egypt.

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parsha Insights

For the week ending 9 April 2022 / 8 Nissan 5782

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Parshat Metzora

Fit to Print

“This will be the torah (the law) of the Metzora...” (14:2)

It always fascinates me how exactly the same amount of news takes place every day. The proof for this is that every day the newspapers contain exactly the same number of pages.

In 1887, Adolph Ochs, the new proprietor of the New York Times, coined the phrase, "All the news that's fit to print", which would be better phrased as “All the news that fits, and if it doesn’t fit, I’m sure we can add a little bit here and there.”

In fact, most of the news that’s printed is far from fit to print. The stock in trade of most newspapers is gossip, be it financial gossip or entertainment biz gossip or political gossip or sports gossip, or just plain gossip gossip.

In Jewish Law, gossip, even when true, is prohibited. No word can emerge from our lips before it is vetted to make sure that it's 'fit to print'.

The Chovot HaLevavot explains that when someone speaks slander or gossips, the sins of the victim are transferred to the slanderer, and the Torah and good deeds of the slanderer accrue to the account of the victim. We learn this from a verse in this week's Torah portion: "This will be the torah (law) of the Metzora on the day of his purification..." This means that on the day he purifies himself and repents for speaking slander, his Torah is considered his own again. However, until he does this, the merit of his Torah belongs to his victim.

In Europe before the war, Rabbi Zvi Dovid, the head of the Krakow Beit Din, fell prey to a tide of untrue rumors and gossip. Disparaging comments could be heard from all quarters, the lies even emanated from the local taverns.

That Shabbat, the Rabbi stood up to address the congregation, "King David said in Tehillim, 'Those who sit by the gate talk about me and make up drinking songs of drunkards'." Said Rabbi Zvi Dovid, "Seemingly, King David is only concerned because ruffians that sit by the gate talk slander about him. Would he be any the happier were great rabbis to talk about him thus?"

The Rabbi concluded, "Actually, were Torah scholars to have spoken badly of King David he would have been able to console himself that all their Torah and good deeds would be transferred to 'his account.' In the situation in which I find myself, however, I seriously doubt how much Torah and mitzvahs will accrue to me — so I am losing out in this world and the next."

Source: *Iturei Torah*

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Rav Kook Torah

Metzora: The Power of Speech

Rabbi Chanan Morrison

Only in Israel

What is the root cause of the disease of tzara'at as described in the Torah? The Midrash explains that this skin disease is a punishment for gossip and slander. A person suffering from tzara'at is called a מצורע (metzora) because he is מוציא שם רע - he spreads derogatory reports. [1]

Given that tzara'at is brought about by slander, one would expect that all peoples would be afflicted, since even non-Jews are culpable for personal damages. Yet, Maimonides wrote that tzara'at is not a natural phenomenon, but a unique sign found

only among the people of Israel. Why should only the Jewish people suffer from this ailment?

Divine Speech

There are two types of speech. There is everyday speech, based on and limited to that which occurs in the physical universe.

And there is a higher form of speech, a holy speech that God bestowed upon Israel. This elevated speech does not originate from the physical world. On the contrary, the world originates from it. This is the speech through which God created the world. "Through the word of God, the heavens were made; and through the breath of His mouth, all of their hosts" (Psalms 33:6).

God granted us the power of His speech, the speech that preceded the world, when He gave us the Torah, the blueprint of creation. "He looked in the Torah and created the universe" (Zohar Terumah 161b). The transmission of Divine speech to the Jewish people is alluded to in the verse: "I put my speech in your mouth... to plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth" (Isaiah 51:16).

Redemption of Speech

The Kabbalists explained that the Hebrew name for Passover, Pesach, is a combination of the words peh sach - "the mouth speaks." The redemption from Egypt, which paved the way for the Torah's revelation at Sinai, also redeemed the faculty of speech. For this reason, Passover is commemorated with a mitzvah of speech, the mitzvah to retell the story of the Exodus. And we find that Moses, aware of this aspect of the redemption from Egypt, tried to disqualify himself by protesting, "I am not a man of speech" (Exod. 4:10).

In an essay entitled "The Redemption of Speech," Rav Kook wrote:

"Sometimes we can sense the connection between our speech and the universe. This is the initial step to redeem speech from its exile.

"As the soul is elevated, we become acutely aware of the tremendous power that lies in our faculty of speech. We recognize clearly the tremendous significance of each utterance; the value of our prayers and blessings, the value of our Torah study and of all of our discourse. We learn to perceive the overall impact of speech. We sense the change and great stirring of the world that comes about through speech." (Orot HaKodesh vol. III, p. 285)

Two Mouths

The most striking expression of the difference between these two levels of speech is the remarkable statement of Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai:

"Had I been present at Mount Sinai, I would have requested that God create us with two mouths: one mouth to speak in words of Torah, and one mouth for all of our worldly needs." (Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot 1:2)

We may lack a mouth dedicated exclusively to Torah and prayer, but we can still deepen our awareness of the extraordinary nature of holy speech. At the start of the morning prayers, we recite a wonderful formula as we prepare our kavanah (mental state): “I hereby ready my mouth to thank and praise my Creator.” With this short declaration, we ready ourselves to employ our mouths for a totally different form of speech. We prepare ourselves to employ the sublime speech that is rooted in the source of Divine wisdom. Since this discourse comes from the elevated speech which was used to create the universe, our prayers have the ability to influence the world and change its course (Olat Re’iyah vol. I, p. 192). With this appreciation for the power of holy speech, we may understand why tzara’at only afflicts the Jewish people. Our faculty of elevated speech, based on the Divine speech which transcends the universe, can influence the world for good and for bad. When we misuse this great power, we damage the world and are held responsible. The affliction of tzara’at, and the process of purifying oneself from it, comes to repair this wrong. The verbal communication of other nations, however, comes from the realm of the physical universe. Since it lacks the power of elevated speech, they are not punished for its misuse.

(Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Mo'adei HaRe'iyah, pp. 295-296.)

[1] *Vayikra Rabbah 16:1. See Rambam, Laws of Tzara'at 16:15, that one fulfills the mitzvah “Be careful regarding tzara'at” (Deut. 24:8-9) by avoiding gossip.*

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subject: **Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib**

Scheinbaum

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Metzora

פרשת מצורע תשפ"ב

זאת תהיה תורת המצורע

This shall be the law of the *metzora*. (14:2)

We are under the impression that the barometer which determines the quality of a friendship is time spent together socially, in conversation and the frequency of communication. Conversely, one who has no external relationship, does not visit or go out to lunch/dinner, manifests limited communication, is not much of a friend. *Horav Eliyahu Svei, zl*, cites the *Midrash Mishlei* (12) that sheds a different light on the criteria for meaningful friendship.

Shlomo Hamelech says, *Mirmah b'lev choshvei ra, u'l'yoatzei shalom simchah*, “There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but, for the counselors of peace, there is

joy” (12:20). *Chazal* say: “Whoever converses with his friend, eats and drinks with him, but (also) will (occasionally) speak *lashon hora* about him, is called *ra*, evil. [He is not a friend]. If one has nothing to do with his fellow, however, does not go out with him for lunch or dinner, does not engage in conversation, but would never speak negatively of him – he is called *shalom*, peace, by Hashem.”

We see from the above *Midrash* that our criteria for defining friendships is unlike that of the Torah. In the Torah’s perspective (which becomes ours), *lashon hora* defines relationships. One can spend all the time in the world with a person, take vacations with him, share in family *simchos*, do everything together, but also speak *lashon hora* about one another – he is not a friend. He is *ra*, evil. The friendship is superficial, a relationship of convenience, but, at the end of the day, a sham relationship. If one can speak negatively of his fellow, he is not his friend. Conversely, if one hardly speaks with the other fellow, but would never speak of him in a degrading manner – he is a friend.

זאת תהיה תורת המצורע

This shall be the law of the *metzora*. (14:2)

The *metzora* is one who is ritually contaminated due to a physical manifestation of a spiritually-induced disease, sort of a spiritual leprosy. The term *metzora* is an acronym for *motzi shem ra*, “one who brings forth a bad name” (*Arachin* 15), engages in evil, slanderous, vulgar speech. It is a broad term which applies to one who uses his mouth to disparage and hurt others. It is not, however, always about vulgarity and disparaging; it is about decency and sanctity, recognizing that the power of speech is a gift from G-d, which is meant to distinguish us from animals. Speech should not be deceptive. It should be a form of communication which is respectable and demonstrates that the individual who is speaking is refined. Silence is a form of speech when used appropriately. Silence that ignores is not much worse than speech that negates. Rather than use the word “nice” to describe a Jew’s speech, I would use the term “kind.” Jewish speech should be kind, meaningful, benevolent. Indeed, it should be *lashon tov*. This is often manifest in the way that we react to someone’s success, or the control we exert when things do not go our way, such that frustration and even anger take hold of us. Let us first address the way we react to another’s success. Do we pay a compliment? Or do we negate his achievement? Or do we just ignore him and his success?

Our reaction to someone else’s success, as mentioned, can be broken down into three forms: the negative reaction, in which one denigrates and finds fault; the indifferent reaction, whereby one simply disregards his fellow’s success/good fortune as if it had not occurred; the positive reaction, which includes accolades, compliments, and best wishes for the future. One who ignores his fellow’s success is no less

jaundiced than his invidious counterpart who is openly negative. Neither one can tolerate another person's success. Pay a compliment – *lashon tov*? Good speech? This is the farthest thing from his mind. Why? It costs nothing to pay a compliment, to be kind, to make someone smile, to empower someone. Yet some of us act as if paying a compliment would diminish our own self-worth. Envy is a powerful deterrent. One whose self-esteem is already low will find himself hard-pressed to say something nice about someone else, for fear that it would compromise his own self-esteem even more.

We all know that most people appreciate a compliment. One who puts time and effort into a project appreciates it when his work is positively recognized. We all like to hear good things about ourselves. Deep down it bothers us when someone who is (supposedly) a good friend ignores our accomplishment. What is it with these people? I gleaned the following idea from a paper written by a respected psychologist. Compliments can trigger our own insecurities. Recognizing that a fellow has an admirable quality or achievement causes us to focus on ourselves and on our own inadequacies. Why could I not have done that? I am just as smart and capable – yet, here I am and there he is. When we are compelled to pay a compliment, when we express our admiration and esteem to someone else, we introspect as if to say, “I could never have done that. I could never have done it as well. I could never look so good or be as accomplished as you.” To be able to laud someone else requires a hefty dose of self-confidence.

Some people see no need to compliment others because they themselves feel self-conscious when they receive compliments. Thus, since they do not appreciate a compliment, why should they bother putting another person in the same uncomfortable position? Such a person views a compliment with suspicion. What does he want from me? Why is he complimenting me? He is about to ask me for a favor, otherwise why would he be flattering me?

Compliments make us vulnerable. When I offer a compliment, I am implying that I took notice and was impressed. By expressing my praise, I put myself in a position which could catalyze my rejection. Does he think I want something from him? Perhaps he wonders what right I have to judge him. Do I think that I am better than he is, that I dole out compliments?

Last is the individual who feels that offering a compliment shifts the balance of power. He fears being perceived as weak. By complimenting someone, am I elevating him over myself? A relationship often involves a power struggle. Am I abdicating my position to him by offering him a compliment?

All of the above are pertinent issues which anyone who is interested in positive personal growth will work through. In conclusion, the inability to render proper recognition of

another's achievement is a personal failing which must be counteracted in order to maintain positive relationships and to grow in personal character as *bnei Torah* and as human beings. *Lashon hora* is not only about speaking negatively or ignoring someone; it is about making a consummate effort to think and speak benevolently of others. The greater our focus is on the positive, the less chance exists that we might utter something negative about someone.

Saying something kind not only makes a person feel good, but it can transform the lives of the benefactor as well as his beneficiary. The following story underscores this idea.

The heroine of the story was living in Germany in the late 1930's, when Hitler's anti-Semitic diatribes were becoming more virulent and the Nazis were carrying out threats with impunity. She was living with her husband and two children in a small town, and decided that if they were going to survive, they had to leave the country. Without a visa, however, it was impossible to leave. The good news arrived in the way of information that a small number of visas for Jews was available in the office in Berlin. Her husband could not leave his job, so she decided it was her responsibility to do what she could to save her family. She boarded the train for Berlin with the hope that she would return that night with four visas.

She arrived in Berlin and immediately took a taxi to the address where the visas were to be available. When she reached the designated office, she was greeted by dozens of men and women who were also applying for the precious visas – to no avail. One mean-looking, bored German bureaucrat was sitting at a desk. He refused to acknowledge anyone. Hours passed, and the people suffered in silence. It was foolish to complain. The Germans did not require an excuse or a reason to punish a Jew. Suddenly, after waiting all day, the bureaucrat stood up, looked at the people and, with a loud contempt-filled voice, announced, “No more visas today. Come back tomorrow!”

The thought of going through the same ordeal again pushed some people to the brink, but what could they do? Our heroine had to find a place to spend the night. She was at her wits end, but she had to dig in and try again. Without visas, she and her family's lives were at stake. She found a room for the night, and, bright and early the next day, she presented herself at the office. The line was shorter, because some people had lost patience. She did not have that luxury. She had no idea how many visas were available. Despite the people who had left, a crowd was still waiting.

Hours passed in fear and silence. These people knew what going home without a visa meant. The bureaucrat continued to ignore them as if they did not exist, as he continued with his paperwork. Late in the afternoon, the bureaucrat broke the silence when he stood up and made another loud announcement: “No visas today. Everyone must go home!” The people were crestfallen; the shock too much to

bear. They could no longer hold their quiet, and they responded with declarations of anger. Their pent-up emotions were frazzled and, with raw anger, they exploded at the bureaucrat.

The woman who had waited patiently for two days was tired, starved, and emotionally spent. How could she return home empty-handed? It was a death warrant for them all. She was about to join the chorus of despair when she decided to do something else – something that no one would have expected. She went over to the bureaucrat's desk, leaned over and said to him, "I would like to thank you for all your time. I am sure that your job is not easy. I would like to wish you a good day." She then slowly turned around and walked out of the room. She walked down the hall with the little strength she had left, her head held high, knowing that she was returning to despair and possibly worse. Suddenly, she heard a voice calling out to her. She turned around to see the bureaucrat running towards her with a handful of papers, "Here, I have visas for you!" She was saved, because she had controlled her emotions and said something kind to a man who probably did not deserve it. She realized that he must have had a small number of visas about which he had to decide to whom he would give them and whom he would ignore. Whatever he would do would cause a riot. So he ignored everyone. She had no idea what prompted him to act in such an ignoble manner, but she was not about to allow his despicable manner to shape her character. Neither should we. We come across people who are good at bringing out the worst in us. We should not permit their contemptible actions to influence our character.

..In loving memory of Mrs. Fanny (Brunner) Feldman by her family

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The Literary Legacy of Horav Shelomoh Wolbe

Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

There are numerous articles on the laws of Pesach, counting Sefirah, and the mourning period during the omer on the website RabbiKaganoff.com under the headings: Chol Hamoed, Chometz, Eruv Tavshillin, Kitniyos, Marror, Matzoh, Pesach, Sefirah, Sefiras Ha'omer.

The seventeenth yearzeit of Rav Shelomoh Wolbe, the most published mussar and hashkafah author of our generation, falls on the 17th of Nissan. I would like to share with our readers what I wrote at the time:

Rav Shelomoh Wolbe passed on to the yeshivah shel ma'alah during Chol Hamo'eid Pesach, leaving the following tzava'ah: "I request and command that I not be eulogized in any format whatsoever. Furthermore, I should not be described by any title

or honor, not as a "gaon," and not as a "tzadik," not even by initials such as zt"l."

In keeping with the Rav's wishes, we are providing a brief sketch of his life, followed by a description of part of the rich legacy of writings he left behind, but we are omitting the appropriate hesped.

Born in Berlin shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Rav Wolbe's early education was in Berlin, in the Frankfurt yeshivah, and then in Rav Botchko's yeshivah in Montreux, Switzerland. In the 1930's, he attended yeshivah in Eastern Europe, spending several years in Mir, Poland, where he became a talmid of the mashgiach, Rav Yerucham Levovitz, and, after Rav Yerucham's passing, of Rav Chatzkal Levenstein, his successor. Throughout Rav Wolbe's life, he viewed himself as a talmid muvhak, a disciple, of Rav Yerucham and as a transmitter of the mussar tradition that traces back to Rav Yisroel Salanter.

THE WAR YEARS

When the Soviet armies overran the town of Mir in the opening weeks of World War II, the yeshivah fled to Lithuania. Rav Wolbe, who was a German national, was forced to separate from the yeshivah and spent the war years in neutral Sweden. While in Sweden, Rav Wolbe lectured to the local Jewish population, in essence creating what may have been the first kiruv rechokim program in the modern world. He and Rav Wolf Jacobson, who was the rav there, became the Swedish contacts for the Vaad Hatzalah. They created a seminary for young women, who were often the only members of their families that survived the inferno of Europe. During this period of his life, Rav Wolbe authored hashkafah sefarim in both Swedish and German for outreach purposes.

After the war, Rav Wolbe moved to Petach Tikvah, Eretz Yisroel, where he married a daughter of Rav Avraham Grodzinsky, Hy"d, the last mashgiach of Slobodka. Through his rebbitzen, Rav Wolbe was a nephew of Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky, zt"l, and a brother-in-law of Harav Chayim Kreiswirth, zt"l.

AS A MASHGIACH

In 5708\1948, Rav Wolbe joined Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro in opening the Yeshivah Gedolah of Be'er Yaakov. Rav Shapiro was the Rosh Yeshivah, and Rav Wolbe was the mashgiach, a position he held for over 35 years. Later, he served as mashgiach in the Lakewood Yeshivah, in Eretz Yisrael, and he opened Yeshivas Givat Shaul. Rav Wolbe gave "mussar shmoozen," "va'adim" (more informal lectures, usually to smaller groups) and lectures in many public and private forums. He also created batei mussar, where he delivered shmoozen and va'adim to long-standing talmidim, seasoned talmidei chachamim who developed into great gedolim and mussar experts themselves.

Rav Wolbe published the substance of many of his lectures in several sefarim on a wide variety of topics. In each volume, he wrote a forward, explaining the purpose for that particular sefer and the place and context in which he had delivered the original lectures, shmoozen, or va'adim. His name does not appear in any of his sefarim.

DERECH HALIMUD - LEARNING STYLE

Rav Wolbe, himself, points out a key component to much of his teaching: "One must learn how to approach a statement of Chazal – to study the depths of its peshat and to experience it, until the hidden light of Chazal's statement illuminates you" (Alei Shur, pg. 9).

What did he mean? This sounds very confusing.

Often, the simple meaning of Chazal's statement is unclear. Yet, if we review the statement over and over, suddenly we realize a deeper and truer understanding of what Chazal meant. At this point, the meaning of the statement illuminates us – whereas before, it had eluded us.

ALEI SHUR

Rav Wolbe published his first Hebrew work, Alei Shur, to provide today's yeshivah student with a basic guide to assist him in becoming a ben Torah. This book, which the author spent thirteen years writing and revising, clarifies the basic areas to develop for someone to ascend to higher levels in his personal service of Hashem. It swiftly became a classic and is a standard, studied text.

Alei Shur defines a yeshivah as a place where one learns to live, not just to study (pg. 31). Based on sources in Chazal, Rav Wolbe contends that learning Torah with bad midos, such as hate, competition, or jealousy, is not considered learning Torah. Learning Torah must assist in the development of one's midos, or it is without value.

In the same context, Rav Wolbe quotes the Rambam who notes that the word "chaver" carries two different meanings. It means a close friend, but it also means a talmid chacham (see Rambam, Peirush Hamishnayos, Demai 2:3). This is because talmidei chachamim become the only true, close friends, since their bond to others is based on their essence as giving people. Thus, someone intensely involved in learning Torah will be extremely careful that all interactions he has with people are pleasant.

WHY DO WE KEEP MITZVOS

Rav Wolbe points out the following anomalous problem that sometimes afflicts Torah Jews. Many people observe mitzvos because of habit – that is how they grew up – but not because they enjoy observing the mitzvos. If you ask them, "Why do you keep mitzvos?" their true answer is, "Because that's how I was brought up."

Rav Wolbe notes that this is equivalent to asking someone, "Why are you eating lunch?", and he answers, "Because that's

how I was educated." This answer is obviously ridiculous. We eat because we are hungry.

Similarly, we should be observing mitzvos because we are hungry for these mitzvos. Therefore, we should perform mitzvos with enthusiasm, because we enjoy them (Alei Shur, Pg. 51).

ALEI SHUR AS A GUIDE

Rav Wolbe felt a yeshivah bachur must develop expertise in four basic areas, aside from the regular Gemara curriculum of the yeshivah.

1. He must know the halacha that affects him. In Rav Wolbe's interpretation, this means he should learn all of Mishnah Berurah.

2. He should know Chumash with Rashi and Ramban. This forms the basis for one's hashkafah on Yiddishkeit.

3. He should know Pirkei Avos, with the commentary of Rabbeinu Yonah. Chazal gave us Mesechta Avos as a basic primer in midos, and Rabbeinu Yonah's commentary on Avos is the best method for internalizing this primer.

4. He should be conversant in Mesilas Yesharim, which Rav Wolbe calls "the dictionary for midos."

Rav Wolbe contends that one who devotes a small amount of his yeshivah learning to each of these pursuits, consistently, will complete all four projects within four years.

This assumes, of course, that the person is highly organized. Rav Wolbe believed strongly in being structured. In his own words, "The greater the person is, the more organized is his life" (Alei Shur, Pg. 68).

TEFILLAH

In the second chapter of Alei Shur, Rav Wolbe discusses the importance of tefillah to a human being. "The ability to pray defines a human being. Animals also wage war, construct homes and live social lives. But only mankind can relate to the Ribono shel Olam and daven" (Alei Shur, Pg. 27). Thus, someone who does not pray properly performs daily activities no differently than does an animal. Only one devoted to tefillah demonstrates the uniqueness of the human being.

"Each davening performed with understanding is a qualitatively different experience and has its own unique feeling and quality. It is indeed impossible that two tefillos should be identical — even though the words are identical. One can compare this to riding a train watching a beautiful landscape. Although the scenery may appear the same, the experience is different from moment to moment. At each moment, one sees the scenery from a different perspective.

Similarly, someone davening should constantly see himself and his relationship with Hashem from a different perspective — just as the traveler is looking at the scenery with a different, fresh perspective."

UPS AND DOWNS

Alei Shur even addresses the emotional ups and downs of the typical yeshivah bachur.

Chapter 6 consists of a correspondence with a yeshivah bachur going through a difficult time, where he sees no success in his learning — he is not remembering what he learned, nor is he focusing enough to understand the shiur or the sugya.

Rav Wolbe points out that a person goes through cycles. Sometimes a bochur is not learning well, and his davening and midos also suffer. Rav Wolbe notes that the source of this difficulty is usually because he is comparing himself to others. Instead, acknowledging my one's skills and qualities and recognizing my shortcomings is a much better approach.

Although I may not remember a sugya as well as others do — if I need to review it many times to retain it, I will have a much greater kinyan on the information than those who absorb the information quickly. (Apparently, Rav Wolbe wrote thousands of such chizuk letters during his lifetime!)

Rav Wolbe focused on his talmidim's needs, both individually and as a group. He directed his topic and the intensity of his delivery to his audience. One talmid, who returned to Yeshivah Be'er Yaakov many years after he had studied there in the '50s, noted that Rav Wolbe's shmooze was less intense. When he asked the mashgiach about this, Rav Wolbe answered: "You belong to a different generation. The generation born before the war received shmoozen that were very intensive experiences. Today's generation cannot tolerate this type of shmooze." Yet, when Rav Wolbe published the second volume of "Alei Shur," thirty years after the first, he notes that the style of the second volume is more intense — since the audience for these shmoozen were his older, more seasoned talmidim. Thus, there is a vast difference between Volume 1 of Alei Shur, which is general hadracha for a ben Torah, and volume 2, which reflects the result of "workshop va'adim" for developing elevated midos.

A talmid once asked Rav Wolbe how long it takes to prepare a shmooze. He answered: "It takes five years to learn how to give a shmooze, five years to learn how to give a va'ad, and five years to learn how to talk to someone."

This was, indeed, another facet of Rav Wolbe's personality — the ability to empathize with the suffering of another. Someone bringing him a problem could see the intensity and anguish on his face, as he identified with the questioner's difficulty.

Recently, someone related that he was unable to discuss a personal matter with Rav Wolbe, because of the latter's weak condition, and, instead, discussed the matter with one of Rav Wolbe's talmidim. He described how he witnessed the same intensity and anguish on the talmid's face that he was familiar with seeing on Rav Wolbe's. Thus, Rav Wolbe had successfully trained a new generation of leaders of mussar for Klal Yisrael.

EDUCATING A GENERATION

Among his many works, Rav Wolbe authored two very important guidebooks: one to teach chassanim how to be good husbands, and the other on the Torah's fundamentals of childrearing. In both instances, the purpose of the sefarim was to teach principles to a larger audience.

Rav Wolbe noted that sometimes people think they are giving their children proper chinuch, but, in reality, just the opposite is happening.

He provides the following examples:

(1) Insisting that a child remain at the Shabbos table, when he is too young to do so.

In this instance, although the parents feel that this is important for the child's chinuch, it is totally counterproductive to force a child to do what he is not ready for. The expectations for a child must always be appropriate to his age.

(2) Parents who grew up in impoverished homes often raise their children by spoiling them- to "make up" for their own origins. However, this is counterproductive for the child's needs.

(3) Often parents say, or imply, that their child should achieve what the parents accomplished, or what the parents aspired to accomplish — even when this may not be within the child's capabilities or inclinations. The parents may want their son to be a rosh yeshivah or at least to be involved in full-time learning, but the child's personality is more appropriate to being an elementary school rebbe, an outreach professional, or a frum businessman!

The result is that the child never learns to serve Hashem in his own, unique way. He is being forced to be what he cannot be, and, therefore, will not be successful at it — while, at the same time, he is being hampered from developing to his own, greatest potential. Eventually, he ends up becoming a non-success.

Timing is everything in child-rearing. One should neither start too early nor wait until too late. Also, there must be a tremendous balance between too much involvement in the child's growth and too little.

Rav Wolbe was opposed to hitting children, both by parents and by mechanchim. He had his own original way of explaining the passage from Mishlei (13:24) "Chosech shivto soneh beno," "One who withholds the rod, hates his child." To fully appreciate Rav Wolbe's explanation of this passage and his approach, I refer you to read what he writes, himself. (The book is available in English translation.)

OUTREACH MANUALS

Possibly the most unusual of Rav Wolbe's writings are his books "Bein Sheishes Le'asor" and "Or Lashav," which are based on lectures he gave to non-observant audiences, after the Six Day War.

During the Six Day War, a new teshuvah movement began, as many secular people recognized the miracle of the war. Rav

Wolbe asked a shaylah from Rav Chatzkal Levenstein, who was at the time the mashgiach in Yeshivas Ponevitz, whether he should become involved in outreach, in addition to his other responsibilities. Rav Chatzkal ruled that whoever is capable of being involved in kiruv rechokim is obligated to do so, and that Rav Wolbe should be involved to the extent that it did not disturb his responsibilities in the yeshivah.

As a result, Rav Wolbe gave lectures on the basics of Jewish belief at army bases, in secular Kibbutzim and to academic audiences. Rav Wolbe began his first lecture with these words, "You invited me to tell you about Judaism, and why the religious parties often create problems for the general public." (Bear in mind that non-observant audiences in Israel are, unfortunately, often hostile to Torah and observant Jews.) Another lecture began, "Many ask, is it possible to change halacha to accommodate the modern world, and how can a modern world be run according to halacha?"

Notice that he was unafraid to deal with controversy and felt that he could convince his hostile audience of the beauty of Torah. As a well-known mechanech once told me, "I doubt that there is a ba'al teshuvah today who is not influenced by his teachings."

In these lectures, Rav Wolbe blended halacha and hashkafah in such a way that someone who was totally non-observant would be drawn to the beauty of Yiddishkeit, while, at the same time, someone halachically committed would suddenly gain new insights into his observance of mitzvos. A secondary purpose in publishing these lectures was to teach frum people how they could influence others and be mekareiv rechokim.

Rav Wolbe's scientific knowledge of the world shows through in these lectures, as well as the importance he placed on being able to communicate the beauty of Torah in a sophisticated manner. Indeed, a talmid told me that he once gave a va'ad in the yeshivah on the correct way to write a letter!

BECOMING A "BAR DA'AS"

Personally, I have found one of Rav Wolbe's smaller sefarim to be even more powerful. A few years before his passing, he published a volume entitled "Pirkei Kinyan Da'as," "Chapters on Acquiring Da'as." (I have intentionally not translated the word "da'as," because translating it defeats the purpose of Rav Wolbe's work.) This book is based on seventeen lectures (shmoozen) given over a period of 40 years.

Rav Wolbe notes the following:

To grow as a Torah Jew, a person must have da'as.

Most individuals do not have a natural sense of da'as and need to be taught. Our generation is particularly short on da'as. This can be demonstrated by the following:

1. The rampant problem today of lack of self-confidence, which he contends is a modern phenomenon.
2. People being frozen into indecision by their "feelings."

3. Accepting certain realities that we should endeavor to change, while at the same time attempting to change things that we should accept.

4. Overreaction to frustration.

5. Lack of marital stability.

What is da'as, and how does one achieve it? This is the subject of the sefer, which is a "must read." But then, all of Rav Wolbe's writings are "Must Reads!"

יהא זכרו ברוך

<https://www.theyeshiva.net/jewish/2392/moshiach-the-leper>
2015

Rabbi YY Jacobson

Moshiach the Leper What Shames You Most: The Story of the 4 Lepers In Our Own Lives

The seventh chapter of Kings II (related to the theme of the portions Tazria and Metzora, and often read as the Haftorah of Metzora), tells a fascinating story, about the "four lepers."

The story takes place during the First Temple era when the Syrian Army swept down on the Northern Kingdom of Israel and laid siege to the city of Samaria (Shomron). (Siege was the ultimate strategy in ancient warfare, comparable to a present-day naval blockade. If an invading force could not penetrate the city walls, the enemy would encamp around the walls of the city, cutting off all supplies, especially food and water, and wait until the inhabitants were starved and forced to surrender.)

The city of Samaria was under siege by the Syrian army. The hunger was devastating. "A donkey's head was being sold for food for eighty pieces of silver, and a cup of dove's dung was a meal sold for five pieces of silver." (Kings II 6:25)

The famine was horrendous, people were resorting to cannibalism. One day the king of Israel, Jehoram (Yehoram), was walking along the inner walls of the city when a woman called to him, saying: "Your majesty, please help me." The king answered, "What is the matter?" The woman said, "My neighbor came to me, and said, 'Come, let us eat your [dead] son today, and then tomorrow we will eat my [dead] son.' So we cooked my son, and ate him. But then the next day when I said to her, 'Now let us eat your [dead] son.' But she refused, and has hidden her son from me [in order to have him for herself]."[1]

Jehoram, the king, was a fickle man. He blamed the great Jewish prophet of the time, Elisha (the disciple of Elijah the prophet), for his troubles, and had issued an edict of death against him. Jehoram even followed his soldier to Elisha's quarters, to observe the arrest and execution. But instead of killing him, the king was confronted with a prophecy from Elisha declaring that G-d would provide deliverance for Israel the very next day.

"Then Elisha said, 'Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah (a particular weight

measure) of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel (a small currency), and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’”

"So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of G-d and said, 'Look, even if the Lord would make windows in heaven [for the rain to come down], could this thing be?' And Elisha said, 'In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.'" (2 Kings 7:1-2).

The Four Lepers

It is at this point where the narrative shifts from what's happening inside the city walls to a scene outside the city walls—and this is where the haftorah of Tazria-Metzora begins—where four lepers are both starving and quarantined because they are lepers and all lepers were quarantined outside of the city.

"Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, 'Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now, therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.'" (2 Kings 7:3-4)

They had at that point three options: 1) They could march back to the city that quarantined them in the first place, and try to get in. But what would be the point? There wasn't any food inside the city. 2) They could march forward where the Syrian Army was encamped. The Syrians had plenty of food. But if the lepers did that, they might be killed on sight, because they were both lepers and from the enemy. 3) They could just sit there outside the walls of the city, and die from starvation without complication.

It was out of this deep distress that they said to each other:

"Why just sit here until we die?"

The four lepers chose to get up and march directly to the camp of the Syrian army. In the evening hours, they marched toward the Syrian camp.

The Escape

It was then that something extraordinary occurred.

The Syrian troops imagined that they heard the noise of chariots, the sound of pounding of hundreds of horses' hooves. They were convinced they could hear the clashing of thousands of swords, the vanguard of an enemy army on the offensive.

The Syrian army panicked and abandoned their camp, leaving their tents, armor, horses, chariots, and all their food behind. In their perception, the Jews hired the Egyptian and Hittite armies to attack them. They fled for their lives.

[This miracle reminds us of what occurred on our own watch in June 1967 during the Six-Day War. When it became clear that the Arabs were going to lose, and lose miserably, President Nasser of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan concocted a story about the Americans and British entering the war on Israel's

side. The demoralized Egyptian soldiers, left mountains of shoes in the desert so as to run faster. They couldn't outrun Israeli tanks and so many were captured that the Israelis did not have where to place them].

A Loaded Camp

"And the lepers came to the edge of the camp, and they entered one tent, and they ate and they drank, and they carried off silver and gold and garments and they hid them; then they returned and entered another tent, and they carried items from there also and went and hid them." (Kings II 7:8)

But then they experience a change of heart: "And they said to each other, 'We are not acting properly. Today is a day of good news, and we are being quiet about it. If we wait till the morning light, then we will have sinned. Now, therefore, let us go and tell what we have learned at the King's household.'" (7:9)

The Good News

The lepers notified the guard at the gate of the city about the news. The gatekeeper had a hard time convincing the king that the Syrians had actually left and were not planning an ambush, but after sending some of his soldiers first, news came back to the monarch that indeed the Syrians have left behind all their belongings and enormous quantities of food.

There was a mad rush. The people ran out of the city to fetch the food of the Syrians. The prophecy of Elisha was fulfilled: A seah of wheat flour and two seah of barley were sold for a minimal shekel.

The king's right-hand man, who had mocked Elisha the day before when the prophet foretold a miraculous deliverance, was assigned to patrol the gates and was trampled to death by the people who were rushing out to buy food at low prices. Elisha's words to him, "you will see it but not eat it," came to fruition.

"Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to take charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of G-d had said." (2 Kings 7:17-18)

Do Something

Like all biblical stories, this one too contains many insights and lessons. Let's focus on three.

Sometimes we feel stuck in life. We find ourselves between a rock and a hardball. All options seem bleak. The worst thing to do in such a situation is to remain in one place. You must stand up and move. You must make a change; do something.

Anything. But move forward. Even though you think you are subjecting yourself to further disaster, just making that move can transform your reality and you may discover an unexpected result that can alter your entire situation.

Sometimes you feel stuck in your business, in your marriage, in your personal psychological condition, or in any other paralyzing situation in life. The worst thing you can do is remain in one place and wait to wither away. Move! Reach out

and speak to another person. Change your schedule. Start doing something new and different in your life. Open yourself up to new types of projects, people, and experiences. Shock your system. Start biking; go to the gym; join a class, a group, become part of a project. Open yourself up to someone and share that which shames you most. Start learning Torah.

Whatever you choose—but ensure it is something new and different. When we change our familiar patterns we open new pathways in our brains, and we generate new energy around us—and that can create opportunities unimaginable before.

Fear Not Opposition

There is another vital message here. Often we are afraid to initiate new projects, undertake new ventures, to ask someone for assistance, since we are scared of what the response might be. If we march ahead, we might experience rejection, and that never feels good. If you are by nature soft and sensitive, getting a “no,” feels devastating. Some people never live out their dreams because they are too afraid of the feedback.

The lepers imagined that an entire Syrian army would be waiting for them to attack. Yet when they moved ahead, they realized there was nobody there.

When you are doing the right thing, when you are doing G-d’s work, do not worry that much about the perception of others and how they will respond. You march ahead and you might discover that there is no opposition.

A wise man (Reb Gershon of Zhlabin) once said to me: What is the difference between a 20-year old, a 40-year old, and a 60-year old? The 20-year old is self-conscious about his place in the world. He is concerned to make a good impression, to be perceived as an awesome young man. He is very sensitive to how people view him. The 40-year old declares: “I do not care what people think of me. I could not care less how others look at me. I must be true to myself. You like me—good! You don’t like me, that’s fine too.” The 60-year old realizes that no one was ever looking at him.

Redemption from the Lepers

Finally, there is another profound message in this narrative. The disease of leprosy was the quintessential malady of ancient times. Lepers were the outcasts of society. They were quarantined, isolated, and rejected. They lived alone on the outskirts of the city, separate from the rest of civilization. Yet the Book of Leviticus dedicates two complete portions to them—to their symptoms, their fate, their healing process, and their return to society. Why?

The answer is in the story of the four lepers. We each have a leper within—that dimension of ourselves that makes us feel isolated, ugly, and unworthy. The extraordinary message of this story is that sometimes the news about salvation comes from the four lepers outside the city. If we ignore the lepers around us, we deprive ourselves of our own redemption. And if we

ignore the leper within ourselves, we deny ourselves our own liberation.

It is precisely the aspects of your personality that you are most ashamed of that may provide you with the most penetrating insights into your life and mission if you only have the courage to expose them and dig deep into them. If you work with those parts of yourself, if you stare them in the eyes, if you acknowledge them with full honesty and vulnerability, if you share them with others you trust, you may discover how they constitute a springboard for your own moral, emotional and spiritual growth. The “leper” within you might set you free.

Moshiach the Leper

Which may be one way of explaining the perplexing Talmudic statement: “What is the name of Moshiach? The leper!” [2]

Why would the Moshiach be given this title?

Because that which shames you most may hold the key to your redemption, if you will only muster the courage to embrace it and see it in its most pristine and pure state. What you have been running away from most, what you have tried to quarantine, what you are so deeply ashamed of, carries your deepest light. You need only trace it back to its authentic nature and origin, and then you will discover how this very “leper” is your Moshiach, your prophet and messenger of psychological and spiritual emancipation.

That is why the name given to Moshiach is the “metzora,” the “leper.” How will Moshiach heal such an insane world (a “meshugene velt”)? He will show that the healing energy was always there. We were just misreading the map—the map of ourselves and of others.

The late Jewish philanthropist Irving Stone spent a lifetime studying greatness, writing novelized biographies of such men as Michelangelo, Vincent van Gogh, Sigmund Freud, and others. Stone was once asked if he had found a thread that runs through the lives of all these exceptional people. He said, “I write about people who sometime in their life have a vision or dream of something that should be accomplished and they go to work. They are beaten over the head, knocked down, vilified, and for years they get nowhere. But every time they’re knocked down, they stand up. You cannot destroy these people. And at the end of their lives, they’ve accomplished some modest part of what they set out to do.” [3]

[1] This is the interpretation of Rashi 6:29. Others explain it differently (see Radak and Rabbag). [2] Sanhedrin 98b [3] This essay is partially based on Likkutei Sichos vol. 22 Tazria-Metzora. Vol. 37 Metzora. Sefer Hasichos 5751 Tzaria-Metzora.