



BS"D

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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TAZRIA METZORA - 5786

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REMEMBER to count the Omer – **Friday night will be 16 days** which is 2 weeks and 2 days of the Omer

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### Kollel Lihora'ah (Yerushalayim)

**"Ask the Rav" — Parshas Tazria Metzora 5786**

**Harav Yaakov Skoczylas Shlita**

**Haircuts on Erev Shabbos Kodesh When It Falls on Rosh Chodesh Iyar**

Q: What is the practical halachah when Erev Shabbos coincides with Rosh Chodesh Iyar—may one shave or get a haircut?

A: The commonly accepted ruling among many leading halachic authorities is that when Rosh Chodesh Iyar falls on Erev Shabbos, even though some are careful to follow the directive of Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid not to take a haircut on any Rosh Chodesh—even when it falls on Erev Shabbos—nevertheless, the practical ruling is to permit haircuts even for those who are stringent in following that directive. This is because, due to the customs of Sefiras HaOmer, one was unable to get a haircut beforehand. To explain: The Mishnah Berurah (siman 493:5) and Kaf HaChaim bring down in the name of the great Achronim that it is permitted to take a haircut on Erev Shabbos in honor of Shabbos when it is also Rosh Chodesh. The reason is that there is an added element of joy—both Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh—and therefore one may take a haircut in honor of both. However, according to the directive of Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid, as brought in the Mishnah Berurah (siman 260:7), one should not shave or take a haircut on Rosh Chodesh. As it states there, some places have the custom not to cut hair or nails on Rosh Chodesh even when it falls on Erev Shabbos, because such was the instruction of Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid. According to this custom, one should be stringent

when Rosh Chodesh Iyar falls on Friday. Nevertheless, in Igros Moshe (Orach Chaim, vol. 6, end of siman 36), Rav Moshe Feinstein writes that when Rosh Chodesh Iyar falls on Erev Shabbos, haircuts are not prohibited on account of Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid's directive, since one was unable to cut hair earlier due to his established custom. This is also the ruling of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l, as cited in the responsa Yisa Yosef (vol. 4, siman 118). Additionally, in Kovetz MiBeis Levi (p. 341), the view of the author of Shevet HaLevi zt"l is brought: if Rosh Chodesh Iyar falls on Friday, those who follow Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid's directive may take a haircut earlier—on Thursday after midday. He cites Kaf HaChaim (siman 493:47), who brings other Acharonim and leniencies in this matter. Therefore, some halachic authorities permit beginning haircuts even on Thursday night after sunset, and one who is lenient in this has authorities to rely upon.

### וזאת תהיה תורת המצורה

**"Who Wants Life?" — The Metzora and the Responsibility of Speech**

**Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik**

**Summarized by Rabbi Nisson E. Shulman**

The Midrash says,

הה"ד מי האיש החפץ חיים: מעשה ברוכל אחד שהיה מחזיר בעירות והיה מכריז ואומר 'מאן בעי למזבן סמא דחיי'. רב ינאי הוה יתיב, שמעיה דמכריז; אמר ליה, 'תא סק להכא'. סלק לגביה. אופיק ליה ספר תהלים, הראה לו הפסוק, 'מי האיש החפץ חיים נצור לשונך מרע סור מרע ועשה טוב'."

"This is the Torah of the *Metzora*. That refers to "Who is the man who wants life?" A certain *rochel* (peddler) was passing through villages and crying out, 'Who wants to buy an elixir of life!' Rabbi Yanai was sitting there, heard his announcement, and said, 'Come here'. The *rochel* approached, and opened the *Sefer Tehilim*, and showed him the passage, 'Who is the man who wants life; let him guard his tongue from speaking evil, turn from evil and do good.'"

That was the "medicine for life" that the peddler was selling. *Amar Rav Yanai, af Shlomo machriz, Shlomo Hamelech* also announced the same thing, *Shomer piv uleshono shomer mitzaros nafsho. Amar Rav Yanai, Kol yamai hayisi kore hapasuk haze*, "My whole life I used to read this *pasuk, velo hayisi yodea heichan peshuto*, "I didn't understand the *pshat*". *Ba rochel ze vehodieni* "until this *rochel* explained it to me" with his advertising a medicine for life. With what did he explain it? With the *pasuk* in *Tehilim, Mi haish hehafetz hayim, netzor leshoncha mera, sur mera vase tov...* The Midrash continues *Lefichach Moshe hizhir es Yisrael, 'Zos tihiye toras hametzora - motzi shem ra*.

This is the Midrash. And usually when a Midrash is found in the Gemarah, the text of the Midrash is much longer and expounded with greater detail than the text as it appears in the Gemarah. That is logical, since Midrash was composed of *derashot*, and the *derashot* were recited Shabbat for the congregation, so it was given in a longer form. So it is with this episode of the peddler and Rav Yanai, presented so dramatically in the Midrash, and given in the Gemarah (Avoda Zara 19b) in abbreviated form. *Machriz Rav Alexandri* – apparently the peddler was Rav Alexandri – *Man baei hayai, man baei hayai* – *kanif veasu kula alma legabai. Amri lei, Hav lan hayai. Amar lehu, Mi haish hehafetz hayim, netzor leshoncha mera, sur mera vase tov. Veshema tomar, (Natarti leshoni mera usefasai midaber mirma), elech veisgare besheina, talmud lomar Sur mera vease tov*. "Who wants life, who wants life?" He gathered a large gathering around him. They said to him, "Give us life!" He said to them, "Who is the man who wants life, let him guard his tongue from evil, turn from evil and do good. And lest you should think, I shall [guard my tongue] by going to sleep? We learn, 'Turn from evil and do good.'"

It is the same story, though the end is remarkable. This *ma'amar* of the *rochel* is very popular among *darshanim, lomdim, and hachmei hamusar*. First of all, what had the *rochel* achieved? What kind of a lesson had he taught? And the *rochel* was not a simple Jew! He was Rav Alexandri!

Second, why was Rav Yanai so impressed with the brilliance and the insight of the *rochel*?

Third, what was the point of Rav Yanai who quoted Shlomo's statement, *Shomer piv uleshono, shomer mitzaros nafsho*, claiming that his whole life he did not understand this *pasuk* until the *rochel* came and taught it to him? What is the difficulty in this *pasuk*? Everyone knows that guarding your tongue saves you a great deal of trouble!

And further, what does the Gemarah conclude? *Zos tihiye toras hametzora, toras hamotzi shem ra*. What has it to do with the *rochel*?

Furthermore, what does the Gemarah mean by *Shema tomar elech veesgare beshena* – who forces him to sleep? And what would the sleep accomplish?

Apparently it was a rule by laid down by *Chaza"l* that *negaim* come as a punishment for *lashon hara*. This is apparent from the Gemara in Avoda Zara, from the Midrash Rabbah, and other places. And the Rambam, at the end of *Hilchos Tumas Tzaraas*, dedicates a long *halakhah* to this concept that *negaim* come as a punishment for *lashon hara*. The Rambam speaks about this very sharply. Apparently *Chaza"l* held it to be a fundamental principle.

Why not another illness?

It is very logical. *Negaim* are different from other illnesses in one important way. In other illnesses, the first symptoms are often very serious and you know that the person afflicted is very sick. Whether he has great pain, fever, convulsions, the first symptoms are a clear indication that the person is seriously ill. *Negaim* appear at first in a very mild and innocuous fashion. *Kenega nir'e li...* It is hardly noticeable, and the person doesn't know that he is sick at all. Only the kohen, the expert, the dermatologist, knows what is a benign *nega* and what is the kind of *nega* that will eventually destroy the entire human body. One has to be a very great expert to be able to discern the difference between a serious *nega* and a simple pimple or discoloration, to decide whether the person is to be rendered *tame* or *tahor*.

*Lashon hara* is the same way. With other sins, people can recognize the magnitude of the violation; whether it is terrible, disgusting, immoral, etc. But the early symptoms of *lashon hara* are almost unnoticeable. Just a few spoken words, indicating something very innocuous about the person who is the subject of *lashon hara*: hardly significant! *Kenega nire li babayit*. It looks like nothing, not worth remarking upon. Have I stolen from him? Hurt him physically? Done him monetary damage? But the expert *kohen*, knows: *Vetime hakohen*. The consequences of *lashon hara* are indescribable. That is why *negaim baim al lashon hara*.

I have, however, a serious question. If the Almighty punished with *tzaraat*, it means that the man spoke *lashon hara*. If he did not speak *lashon hara*, there cannot be defilement through *tzaraat*. After all, (as we noted), our sages have established this as a fundamental principle.

Yet we find a story told in *Iyov* (Job) *Ish haya be'erezt Uz, Iyov shemo. Vehaya haish hahu tam veyashar, viyerei Elokim, vesar mera*. This gives *Iyov* a great tribute, that he was *tam, veyashar, vesar mera*. We cannot say that *Iyov* was all these things, and that he spoke *lashon hara*! If he had spoken *lashon hara* he would not have been a *tam veyashar vesar mera*! And the *pasuk* in *Yekezekel* cites *Iyov* as an example of perfection - *Im yaamdu shalosh anashim haele, Noach, Iyov veDaniel!* *Iyov* is therefore the example of a *tzadik*! And yet, in the book of *Iyov* it is written "*Vayetze haSatan meet penei Hashem, vayach et Iyov bishchin ra mikav raglo ad kadkado!* *Iyov* was smitten from head to toe with vile boils". He became a *metzora*! *Vayikach keli cheres lehisgared bo vehu yoshev besoch haefer*; "He took a shard with which to scratch himself, while sitting in ashes. So *Iyov* was afflicted with *tzaraas* even though he did not engage in *lashon hara*! How can that be? Is the Ribono shel Olam *ase Torato plaster*? Did *Chaza"l* has *vehalila* make a mistake? That is impossible! And what shall we do with *Iyov*, and what the Tanach says of him – *Ish tam, veyashar, viyerei Elokim*? Certainly with that testimonial he did not engage in *lashon hara*?

Actually, this can be explained as follows. *Lashon Hara* is a result. Every sin has a root source, a reason that a person commits that sin. We would be better off saying *viduy*, not for the sin itself, but for the reason for the sin.

There are two reasons, or sources for the sin of *Lashon hara*. One is when a man is a misanthrope and hates other people. The world is full of people who cannot see anything good in their fellow human beings. Such a person is *einav raah beshel acherim*, not because of competition, or some hurt sustained in a fight or argument, or because he has been offended in some other way. He actually has no connection or relationship with the person who is the object of his *lashon hara*. That person never did any evil towards him. But he cannot stand it to hear another person being praised. He can't stand it to hear that a person is handsome, capable, a *lamdan*, clever in business. The moment he hears someone praising another, his natural reaction is *eyin hara*, to tear that person down, speak *lashon hara*, and show that he is worthless. That *lashon hara* comes from *ayin hara*, because that person himself is *ra: einav tzara beshel acherim*. It comes from *rish'ut*. That is the first category of *lashon hara*.

There is also a second category of *lashon hara*. This class of *lashon hara* doesn't have its source in cruel, jealous, or evil tendencies, in *eyin hara*. There are people who are perfect in their own way: *frum*, good, involved in learning. Whatever they do is correct, even perfect. But they have no interest in others: neither in the *kelal*, nor in any other individual. "I am *frum*. That is good enough."

For example: When *Yeshayahu* came to *Hizkiyahu Hamelech* and said, *Ubanecha yihiyu sarisim lemelech Bavel, Hizkiyahu* responded, *Ach beyamav lo sihiye haraa hazos*. "As long as my own eyes will not see this, I don't care about the children". Such people are very strict upon themselves. They do nothing wrong. They do not sin. But for the *asid*, the future, they do not care. I know many such people today who have no care about their children. You can't say they aren't true and good Jews. They are. But they are possessed with a kind of split personality. For themselves they are *medakdek bemitzvah kalah kevahamura*. But when it comes to their children they can even overlook *hilul Shabbat!* And there are others who do care for their children, but do not care for the children of others. They do not care about others receiving a true Torah *hinuch*. They don't care about building *Yeshivos*. They are *sur mera*, but they are not *ase tov!* For these are two distinct levels. There is a level of *sur mera*, and there is a higher level of *ase tov*.

The Torah testifies that Noach was an *ish tzadik, tamim haya bedorosav*. In connection with Avraham, however, the word *tzadik* is missing. The Torah tells us that to Avraham Hashem says, *Heye tamim vehithalech lefanay*. It doesn't say that the Ribono shel Olam said to him "You are a *tamim*". It states that He commanded Avraham to become a *tamim*. Apparently the Ribono Shel Olam felt that Avraham still lacked something of *temimut*. *Hishalech lefanay veheye tamim*. But by Noach the Torah states, in the indicative case, *Noach ish tzaddik, tamim:*. It is a fact, not a demand! It appears that the Ribono Shel Olam spoke of Noach in higher, more praiseworthy terms than of Avraham! Nevertheless, with Avraham Hashem concluded a Covenant, and whenever Hashem wants to comfort Jews, it says, *Vezecharti es brisi Avraham*. In Shmone Esre the words *Elokey Avraham, Elokey Yitzchok and Elokey Yaakov* are included, while all Noach's descendants are *bnai Noach* and there is no *bris* comparable to what you find with Avraham (notwithstanding the *keshes baanan*), and you do not find *vezacharti es brit Noach* in the Torah. Nor do you find *Elokey Noach* either. Why?

It is because of one thing. Noach was indeed a *tzadik* and a *tamim*. He was a *sur mera*. As far as he himself was concerned, Noach did no evil. He was perfect, without blemish. But he lacked the *ase tov*. The Midrash says, in *Vezos Haberacha*, that when Noach comes to Avraham and Moshe, and says *Ani gadol mimchem*, I am greater than you, Moshe and Avraham answered, *Mashal lishtei sefinot shehayu mehalchos bayam*, Two ships at sea; One captain saved himself but not his vessel. The other saved himself and his vessel as well. *Mi gadol mimi?*

The lesson of that Midrash is that Noach was not an *ase tov*. The Zohar states it clearly. If the Ribono Shel Olam would have told Moshe or Avraham, *Ase lecha tevas atzey Gofer ki hineni mevi mabul al haaretz*

*leshaches kol basar, ki oscha raisi tzadik bador haze*, would Avraham and Moshe have gone meekly into the Ark? They would not! Moshe would have cried out, *Mecheni na misifrecha asher katavta!* Either all are saved or none are saved! You know how Avraham pleaded for Sedom. Noach heard *Ki otcha raisi tzadik bador haze*, a smicha from the Ribono Shel Olam, and liked the passage very much. And he went right into the Ark.

This is what the Ribono Shel Olam said to Avraham. Avraham! I don't want you to be a *tamim* like Noach, an *ish tzadik tamim haya bedorosav*. I want your *temimus* to be different. *Hishalech lefanai*. Learn the lessons of Hashem and teach them. Go over the entire world. Teach them to know Hashem. *Vayikra beshem Hashem, Vayita eishel biBeer Sheva, Vayiven sham mizbeach*. Go throughout the entire world to spread my words, my knowledge, my faith, my ethics, and my mitzvos. Spread *Elokim* over the world. *Hishalech lefanai ve'heve tamim*, not a *tamim* for yourself alone. Be a *tamim* for everyone. Not *Es haElokim hishalech Noach. Hishalech lefanai!* Spread the word! You have a mission! So Noach was *sur mera*, and Avraham and Moshe were *Sur mera vease tov*.

By *Iyov* you have the same thing. If a man is only a *sur mera*, and not an *ase tov*, you can ask: "Why don't you go to a meeting about building a Yeshiva or supporting it?" Yes, you learn yourself – yes, you create sharp pieces of Torah about the Rambam – yes, and you even learn Zohar. But whatever you do, still, about *tzarchei harabim*, there is no one with whom to go to the table. If a person is not an *ase tov*, it is impossible for him to avoid speaking *lashon hara*, since he cannot otherwise justify himself for not being an *ase tov!* If other Jews are just as good as he is, and *kol Yisroel hverim*, then you must be able and willing to sit with all of them at the table! He has no excuse for not participating! So he must speak *lashon hara*, not because he is hateful, misanthropic or jealous; not because he can't stand it if another has a little *kavod*, wealth or *lomdus*. Not because of this does he speak *lashon hara*. It is because he tries to justify himself, "How can I do something for this cause? The people involved are not worthy enough. So it is not appropriate for me to sit together with them. *Miyakirey Yerushalayim lo hayu yoshvim biseuda ad sheyedu mi haya yoshvim imahem*. It is possible that they never sat in a seudah, because they could always find reasons why "not at my table". *Leyda mi haya yoshev imahem* is bitter. Because automatically the result is *lashon hara*. By *Iyov* it does not say *veasa tov*, only *vesar mara*. *Chaza"l* wanted to present *Iyov* only as a *sur mera*. He was not an *ase tov*. So they pushed him in between these three who sat by Pharaoh in the ministry, when he asked, "What shall we do with the Jews?" Bilaam said, throw the children into the sea. *Iyov* held his peace. Yisro, the non-Jewish priest, was the one who protested and said, "Under no circumstances! How can you kill innocent children? Just because you, Pharaoh, are afraid, you have to kill Jewish children?" But *Iyov shasak*. Why did *Chaza"l* place him in such a situation? Because *Chaza"l* knew that *Iyov* was not an *ase tov*. *Iyov* himself would never have thrown children into the Nile. He was an *ish tam veyashar, viyere Elokim*. But when they were throwing Jewish children into the Nile, he was not ready to tear his clothes and fight with Pharaoh.

During the last war, there was such a personage as well, a "righteous person" in the world who was held to be a *kadosh*: Ghandi. When he died, Jews eulogized him. It was dangerous for a Rav not to eulogize Ghandi. They would have thrown him out of the shul! And when they killed six million Jews and many more millions of innocent people of other faiths, Ghandi did not say one word! Could Ghandi have thrown children into the gas chambers? *Has veshalom*. Ghandi would have been unable to do this. Certainly he was a *sur mera*. But he certainly was not in the category of *ase tov!*

So if someone is not an *ase tov* he must, perforce, fall into *lashon hara*. He must say something about why the other person is not good enough to sit together with him at the table. *Sof kol sof*, At the end of the day, it ends with *negaim* and *tzaraas*.

When did the RBSHO heal *Iyov*? In the end of the pasuk it says, *Veata, kechu lachem shiva parim veshiva eilim ulechu el avdi Iyov, vehaalitem ola*

*baadchem veIyov avdi yispalel aleychem, ki im panav esa, levilti asos imachem nevala*. So the Ribono Shel Olam told Elipaz haTemani and his friends to bring *karbanos*, and ask *Iyov* to pray for them.

Where have you heard such a thing? If someone sins, who should pray? The *chotei* himself! Why should another plead for him? *Vayaasu kaasher diber aleyhem Adoshem, vayisa Adoshem pnei Iyov, Vaadoshem shav es shvus Iyov behispalelo baad reehu*.

The Ribono Shel Olam didn't need *Iyov's* tefila. The prayers of the three friends would have been enough. But the Ribono Shel Olam wanted *Iyov* to climb to a new level. *Iyov*, for the first time in his life, should be able to say a prayer for another person as well.

*Iyov* prayed a great deal in his life. It says, every Sunday, *Vayehi ki hikifu yemei hamishte, vayishlach Iyov vayekadshem, vehishkim baboker veheela olos mispar kulam, ki amar Iyov, ulay hat'u banay, obercho Elokim bilevavam, kacha yaase Iyov kol hayamim*. So he prayed and brought *korbanos*, but only for his own children. *Iyov* did not bring one *karban* for anyone else.

Jewish *tefilos* are not *belashon yahid!* All *tefilos* are *belashon rabim*. If a Jew has a sick brother, or son at home, he prays for him *besoch shear holey Yisrael*. By himself he is nothing. *Has Veshalom* when a Jew is in *avelus*, and we say to him, *Hamakom yenachem eschem*, we must add *besoch shear aveili Tzion viYerushalayim*. *Tefilas hayahid* doesn't exist. *Iyov* only prayed for his children, and if so you are not an *ase tov*, but only a *sur mera*.

The *Shmone Esre* is *belashon rabim*, Refaenu Hashem Elokenu. We never say, Refaeni Adoshem Elokenu.

In Hebrew there are two words, *shamor* and *natzor*. What is the difference between them? *Shamor* is if I simply watch an object. *Ki yiten ish el reeihu kesef o kelim lishmor*. How do I watch something? It is given into my possession, and I make sure it doesn't get lost, stolen, or destroyed by fire. I watch in a negative sense, that damage should not take place. A *shomer* doesn't have to do anything positive for the object he is guarding. *Natzor* means improving, cultivating the object, making sure it shall grow. *Notzer teina yochal piryo*. You have to do all kinds of work to make it grow: weed it, water it, and prune it. So *notzer* doesn't only mean that I take the object and watch it. It means I tend the object and improve it in a positive sense, *ase tov*.

The pasuk is interesting: *Ashrei temimei derech halolchim bederech Hashem*. There are many *temimim* who go in *derech Hashem*: Noach, for example. But Avraham's *temimus* is different. Noach was a *shomer*. Avraham was a *notzer*, *hishalech lefanai*, build, plant, and develop. *Vayita Eishel biBeer Sheva, Vayiven sham mizbeach*. So more important than *Ashrei temimei derech halolchim bederech Hashem*, is *Ashrei notzrei eidosav, bechal lev yidreshuhu*. They will seek Him, spread His name, and plant.

Therefore *Chaza"l* explain very well. *Zos tihye toras hametzora. Hu hadavar "Mi haish hahafetz hayim. Maase berochel echad shehaya mahazir baayaras, vehaya machriz veomer, 'Man baey hayay, man baey hayay. Rabbi Yanai hava yasiv. Shama demachriz. Amar ta sak lehacha. Zil li. Salik legabey, hotzi lo sefer Tehilim, her'a lo pasuk, "Mi haish hehafetz hayim: netzor leshoncha mera"*. Not *shemor* but *netzor*. The Torah did not mean, that to avoid *lashon hara* you have to shut your mouth and say nothing. The opposite of *lashon hara* is not *shetika!* The opposite of *lashon hara* is *davka* speaking, but talking how? Talking constructively, working, spreading Torah, *daas Hashem, yiras shamayim, masorah, kabalah*. *Netzor*, cultivate your tongue, *notzer te'eyna yochal pirya, Sur mera* is not enough. The opposite of *lashon hara* is *vease tov!* Because if you are not a *vease tov*, you must succumb to *lashon hara*.

*Amar Rav Yanai*, "O now I understand. I made a mistake. I had thought that not to talk *lashon hara* you have to keep silent! *Af shlomo mahriz*. I made a mistake because I looked in *Mishlei*, not in *Tehilim!* *Chaza"l* say, *Haroeh Shlomo yitzape lechochmah*. Shlomo's *Mishlei* is *Sefer Hachochmah*. *Tamachti es yesodosay besefer hachochmah. Haroeh David bahalom yetzapeh lachasidus*. If you look from the standpoint of *chochmah*, from the

Shlomo standpoint, what is the opposite of *lashon hara*? No talking! Keeping silent! *Af Shlomo machriz: shomer piv uleshono shomer mitzarot nafsho*. I always thought that if a Jew wants to stay away from *lashon hara*, he does not have to teach anyone or help anyone. He does not have to become involved in the good of the community. He needs to do no planting, no building, and no learning *Torah barabim*. Keep your mouth shut and that is all! *Amar rav Yanay kol yamai hayisi kore hapasuk haze velo hayisi yodea heichan peshuto shel mikra!* I didn't understand what Shlomo was talking about! *Ad sheba rochel ze vehodia inyano*, that *Chochmah* is not enough, *chochmah* means keep silent, but with *hassidus*, you have to be *netzor leshoncha mera – sur mera vease tov*.

*So Chaza"l in the gemarah said it very well. Machriz Rav Alexandri, man baey hayai, man baey hayai, amar lahem, mi haish hehafetz hayim, veshema tomare elech veisgarei besheina?* If you may not speak *lashon hara*, it is better if a Jew should sleep away the time! At night a Jew certainly doesn't speak *lashon hara*! There are Jews who can sleep away 70 years! *Choni HaMeagel* did it – and didn't speak *lashon hara*! No, that is not the alternative of *lashon hara*, If you sleep and do not talk *lashon hara*, that is *gaava*, that is laziness, that is *sur mera*. That is *Iyov*, and that is why he was punished with *negaim*. *Veshema tomere elech veisgarei besheina?* *Talmud lomar, sur mera vase tov*, the alternative to *lashon hara* is not sleeping and keeping silent, but *davka dibur, veal ze Moshe mazhir es Yisroel, zos tihye toras hametzorah, vehuva el hakohen*.

*Velakah hakohen shtey tziporim hayos, So Chaza"l said very well, Ilan tziporim kolanin*. These birds chirp. *Amar hakadosh baruch hu, yavo kol viyechaper al hakol*, The Ribono shel Olam, to characterize the *metzora*, should have brought a mute animal, to teach the *metzora* you have spoken *lashon hara*, see this mute animal, this sheep that is mute, and learn how to keep still, No! the Ribono Shel Olam required that birds that spend their entire life in chirping be brought. Why? Because the cure of *lashon hara* is not *shetika*. It is *davka dibur*. *Yavo kol viyechaper al hakol*. But it depends what kind of a *kol*. When the bird chirps, instinct drives it to do the *ratzon Hashem*.

The Rambam said it. He said that whatever a *haya* and a bird does, is one mitzvah after another, because whatever it does is not done by *behira* but by instinct, by the will of God, the law of nature. So the *dibur* of the bird is a holy *dibur*, and so the *kol* must come to atone for the *kol*, not silence, but the kind of *Dibur* that is the will of God, זאת תהיה תורת, ועל זה משה מזהיר את ישראל, וזהו אף הכהן ולקח הכהן למצורה שתי צפורין חיים.

### Shalom Zachar: Hodaah/Shabbos Protection/Forgotten Torah Chaim Ozer Shulman

In honor of an upcoming Bris of a grandson born to Moshe & Henny Shulman

On the first Friday night following the birth of a baby boy, it is customary to gather where the infant is located, to visit for a *shalom* and *zakar*. As the Rema states (YD 265:12): *נהגו לעשות סעודה ומשתה בליל שבת לאחר שנולד זכר נכנסים אצל התינוק: "It is customary to make a meal and festive gathering on Friday evening after a male child is born where people enter to visit the home of the baby<sup>1</sup> and partake of some food there, and this too is considered a seudas mitzva."<sup>2</sup>*

#### Reason #1 – סעודת הודאה

Chazal refer to this gathering as *ישוע הבן*. The Gemara in **Bava Kamma 80a** states: *Rav, רב ושמואל ורב אסי איקלעו לבי שבוע הבן ואמרי לה לבי ישוע הבן, Shmuel, and Rav Assi came to the house of the 'week of the son,' and some say to the house of the 'salvation of the son.'* Rashi explains *בני שבוע הבן*

1 While some frame the Shalom Zachar as a *nehom* as discussed below, suggesting that the infant's presence is essential, Rav Moshe Sternbuch in תשובות והנהגות (II; 202) states that since the other reasons of סעודת הודאה and קדושת שבת apply even without the baby, the minhag is to make a Shalom Zachar at the parents' home [or, presumably, grandparents' home] even if the baby is still in the hospital.

2 The Rema describes the gathering as a *seuda* מצוה, yet also uses the phrase *לשעום שם*. Most poskim do not classify it as a true *seuda* מצוה but rather a *minhag*.

referring to *הבן*, while **Tosafos** in the name of Rabbeinu Tam (or as cited in the Trumas Hadeshen – Rabbeinu Chananel) interpret **בני ישוע הבן** *שעושיין שמחה על שניצול מן הסכנה*. 'the house of the salvation of the son, that one makes a celebration because the child was saved from danger.'

According to Tosafos, the gathering is fundamentally a **סעודת הודאה**, expressing gratitude that the infant has safely emerged from the *סכנה* of childbirth. The infant's arrival into the world is not taken for granted; it is recognized as an act of *yeshu'ah*.

The reason the סעודת הודאה is done on ליל שבת is given by the תרומת הדשן על סעודת מצוה על שנושע ונמלט ממעי אמו...קבעה בלילי שבת בשעת שהכל מצויין #269 "for everyone is found at home at that time," making Shabbos night the natural time for the *Seudas Hodaah*.

#### Reason #2 – A Shabbos Protection

**Midrash Rabbah Emor 27:10** teaches: *משהל למלך...משהל תחת אמו...משל למלך* ששכנס למדינה וגזר ואמר כל אכסנאין שיש כאן לא יראו פני עד שיראו פני המטרונא תחלה כך אמר הקב"ה לא תביאו לפני קרבן עד שתעבר עליו שבת שאין שבעת ימים בלא שבת ואין מילה בלא שבת...משפט אדם ומשפט בהמה שוים משפט אדם וביום השמיני יומל בשר ערלתו "And it shall be seven days under its mother... this may be compared to a king who entered a province and decreed that no guest may appear before him until first appearing before the Matrona (queen; consort) So too HKBH says **do not bring an offering before Me or perform a Bris until it has passed through a Shabbos** for there are no seven days without Shabbos and there is no milah without Shabbos ...the law governing man and the law governing an animal are parallel, the law of man On the eighth day his foreskin shall be circumcised and the law of an animal, from the eighth day and onward it shall be accepted."

Before entering the bris, **the baby must first encounter Shabbos**, the *מטרונא*. Shabbos thus serves as a **protective and preparatory stage**, enveloping the newborn in קדושה before the bris.

A related idea is found in the Zohar Yisro 27:445 (also quoted by Rav Sternbuch below) "All blessings, above and below, depend upon the seventh day."

Similarly the Tshuvos vHanhagos II;202 from Rav Moshe Sternbuch says: ומיהו נראה שעיקר הטעם שמשום בשבת הוא ע"פ מה שמבואר בזה"ק שכל השבוע מתברך משבת קודש ולכן יש חשיבות לשבת שלפני הנישואין או לפני מילה או אפילו לפני יאהרצייט כי אז הזמן שהשפע כבר מוכן רק יורד כל דבר בזמנו ולכן בשבת מודה אבי הבן ומשבח לה' על השפע וברכה דמילה שבא כבר אז בשבת וכל אחד בא ומברך אותו ומסייע זכות הרבים "It appears that the primary reason for Friday night Shalom Zachar is based on the Zohar's teaching that the entire week is blessed from Shabbos. There is special significance to the Shabbos preceding a wedding, a bris, or even a *yahrzeit*, as at that time the flow of *bracha* is already prepared, though it descends in its proper time. Therefore, on Shabbos thanks and praise to Hashem is given for the *shefa bracha* of the bris that has already begun, and people come to bless the baby, with the merit of the *tzibur* helping to draw down further blessing and *shefa*, as all join in gratitude, joy, and praise of Hashem for His kindness."

#### Reason #3 – Remembering the Forgotten Torah

Alongside this framework of Hodaah and Shabbos protection, a third interpretation appears in the Acharonim. The Derisha on the Tur (YD 264) writes: *מה שנוהגין בשבת לבקר אצל התינוק הנולד משום שהוא אבל על תורתו ששכח* "The custom to visit a newborn on Shabbos is because he is in a **state of mourning over the Torah he has forgotten**, as stated in the Gemara in Niddah... and it would seem that for this reason milah was given on the eighth day, after the days of mourning have passed."

This is rooted in the Gemara in Niddah 30b: *וכיון כל התורה כולה... ושכח את כל התורה כולה* "A baby in utero is taught the entire Torah... but when he comes into the world, an angel strikes him on the mouth and causes him to forget all of it." The Taz (and Shach) explain: *והוא כמו נחום אבלים, דהתינוק אבל הוא על התורה ששכח* "It is like comforting the infant who is in mourning over the Torah he has forgotten."

Here, the Shalom Zachar (or in this case Zachor) becomes an acknowledgment of the Torah that is lost and must be relearned.<sup>3</sup>

### What Was Really Forgotten?

The explanation that the infant is *אבל על תורתו שלמד במעי אמו ושכחה* invites a deeper question: what is this lost Torah? What does it mean that *מלמדין אותו כל התורה כולה... וכיון שבא לאויר העולם בא מלאך וסטר על פיו ומשכחו כל התורה כולה*? Another question: the Gemara in Kiddushin 30b says Torah is the antidote to the yetzer hara *“I created the evil inclination, and I created Torah as its remedy.”* why remove it at the very moment one enters a world of *לפתח חטאת רובץ* the yetzer hara?

The Gemara in Niddah 30b describe that period in utero as one of unparalleled clarity. *“There are no days in which a person is in a state of greater טוב than those days”* reflected in the verse: *“Who will return me to the months of old... when the secret of God rested upon my tent.”* (Iyov 29). The Maharsha, relating this to the Gemara in Sanhedrin 91b which notes that while the *נשמה* is present from the earliest stage, the *יצר הרע* asserts itself at birth *לפתח חטאת רובץ*. The moment of birth is thus entry into a world of struggle.

It may be that the Torah taught in utero is not Torah in its practical form, but its **inner essence** *פנימיות התורה* a direct awareness of divine truth of the *סוד* described by Iyov. This resembles the knowledge of the *מלאכים* who perceive truth but do not engage in learning Torah as given at Sinai *לא ניתנה* לא למלאכי השרת.

But such knowledge, precisely because it is effortless, cannot sustain a person in this world. Even *הראשון*, in a state of pure טוב, was not immune to failure. Once a person is born, and the struggle with the *יצר הרע* begins *עמל* the *תורה* is required. As the Gemara Kiddushin 30b, quoted above, says *אם אתם* *עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו... ואם לאו לפתח חטאת רובץ*. If you engage and toil in Torah learning the yetzer hara can be overcome.

From this perspective, the forgetting is not merely a loss, but a necessary transition. The child must relinquish an innate clarity in order to acquire Torah anew through effort.

The Shalom Zachar thus becomes not only a response to what has been lost, but a recognition of what lies ahead. It is, in part, a quiet charge, to take a *נשמה טהורה* and nurture it through *תורה* and *יר"ש*, so that it may, through effort, be safe from the yetzer hara and regain some of the clarity it once possessed.

## RAV SCHACHTER ON THE PARSHA Vol II

Insights and Commentary Based on the Shiurim of Rav Hershel Schachter  
Adapted by Dr. Allan Weissman <https://a.co/d/2aj0sJs>  
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### PARSHAS TAZRIA – CLASSES OF TUM'AH

The Mishnah in Kereisos (8b) teaches that a yoledes (a woman who has given birth) is one of four mechusrei kapparah (literally, those lacking atonement), along with a zav, zavah, and metzorah. Despite their immersing in a mikveh and waiting until shki'ah (or in the case of a yoledes, the end of her forty or eighty-day melos, that consists of some days of tum'ah and some days of taharah), these individuals remain tamei with respect to eating kodshim and entering the Beis HaMikdash until they bring specific purification korbanos. The Mishnah (8a) teaches that if a woman gave birth several times, and is therefore obligated to bring several sets of korbanos, once she brings one set, she may partake of kodshim and enter the Beis HaMikdash. This is because bringing the korbanos mechusrei kapparah is considered the completion of the taharah process. The Gemara therefore compares the korbanos to tevilah in a mikveh. One who contacted five

instances of tum'ah is tahor as soon as he is tovel one time, since he had a single state of tum'ah that tevilah removes. Similarly, one set of korbanos is metaher a yoledes from a number of births, even though she remains obligated to bring the rest of the sets of her korbanos.

The Gemara in Nedarim (35b) also relates to the idea that the korban yoledes is a metaher. Whenever one brings a korban to the Beis HaMikdash, da'as (consent) of the person on whose behalf it is offered is required, both when the korban is consecrated and when it is offered. The Gemara explains that the korbanos of mechusrei kapparah are exceptions to this rule. A man may bring this type of korban for his young children who have tum'as zav or for his wife who is a shotah after she has given birth, despite their lack of ability to give consent. Again, this type of korban is similar to the taharah of immersing in a mikvah. One does not require intent for tevilah (mid'oraisa; see Chullin 31a-31b), and the same is true for the korbanos of mechusrei kapparah.

The need for a korban in order for these teme'im to complete their taharah process highlights the stringency of the class of tum'ah that affects the mechusrei kapparah. Tum'as sheretz and tum'as meis are examples of tum'as magga – tum'ah that results from contact with something external that is tamei. This type of tum'ah is transmitted through touching a sheretz or by being under the same roof as a meis. In contrast to tum'as magga, the mechusrei kapparah possess a מגופו עליו מגופו, where the tum'ah originates within one's own body, and this is considered a more severe form of tum'ah.

For example, some Rishonim maintain that the leniency of ספק טומאה ברשות – a tum'ah uncertainty that occurs in a public domain is deemed tahor (Taharos 4:11) is limited to cases of tum'as magga (see Tosfos, Niddah 2a, s.v. mei'eis, and Shitah Mekubetzes, Bava Kamma 11a, s.v. d'ein, against the view of Tosfos, Bava Kamma 11a, s.v. d'ein).

Likewise, the Mishnah in Pesachim (95b) teaches that in the event a majority of the tzibbur is tamei meis on the fourteenth of Nissan and the Korban Pesach is offered in a state of tum'ah, zavim, zavos, niddos, and yoldos may not eat from it. The dispensation allowing the Pesach to be offered and eaten b'tum'ah applies only to forms of tum'as magga, not to those individuals who contracted a מגופו עליו מגופו. Similarly, a tzibbur that is tamei with such a self-issuing tum'ah may not offer the Korban Pesach in this state. The Rambam (Hilchos Bi'as Mikdash 4:12; Hilchos Korban Pesach 7:1), against the view of Tosfos (Zevachim 17b; 22b), maintains that the prohibition to offer a korban b'tum'ah is only overridden for tum'as meis, and not even for other forms of tum'as magga.

Another difference between tum'as magga and מגופו עליו מגופו on a level of d'oraisa relates to entry into Har HaBayis. The Gemara in Pesachim (67a) notes that the word מחנה appears three times in the pessukim that discuss the mitzvah to send the teme'im outside the various machanos: *צו את בני ישראל וישלחו מן המחנה כל צרוע וכל זב וכל טמא לנפש מזכר עד נקבה תשלחו אל מחוץ למחנה תשלחוהו ולא יטמאו את מחניהם אשר אני שוכן בתוכם*. Command Bnei Yisrael that they shall expel from the camp everyone with tzara'as, everyone who has had a zav-emission, and everyone contaminated by a human corpse... (Bamidbar 5:2–3). The Gemara explains that these three machanos correspond, in descending order of kedushah, to מחנה שכינה (Azarah), מחנה (Har HaBayis), and מחנה ישראל (Yerushalayim). The passuk lists three impure individuals – the metzorah, the zav, and the tamei meis – in order of decreasing tum'ah, teaching that these individuals may not enter these three machanos, respectively.

A metzorah has the highest level of tum'ah, and he is forbidden to enter all three camps, even מחנה ישראל. The next tamei individual, the zav, represents the category of מגופו עליו מגופו. All teme'im in this category are excluded from both מחנה שכינה and מחנה לוייה. Finally, a tamei meis, whose tum'ah is less severe since it is merely a tum'as magga, is only excluded from מחנה שכינה. Rabbinically, the Har HaBayis was divided into three sections, and a tamei meis was not allowed into the inner two sections (Mishnah Keilim 1:8).

<sup>3</sup> The minhag of Shalom Zachar has been traditionally limited to a boy. One explanation links it directly to the impending bris milah; another ties it to the concept of forgotten Torah. At the same time, according to Tosafot's framework of Seudas Hodaah, one might have expected a parallel for a girl. In practice, this dimension is often expressed through other forms of thanksgiving like a kiddush.

The nature of tum'as ba'al keris is the subject of a machlokes Tanna'im (Sifrei, Devarim 23:11) regarding his permissibility to enter Har HaBayis. The machlokes depends on whether tum'as ba'al keris is classified as a טומאה מגופו like tum'as zav, or whether a ba'al keris becomes tamei through contact with the emission itself, thus labeling his tum'ah as tum'as magga (Rash, Keilim 1:1). The Rambam implies that a ba'al keris may indeed enter the Har HaBayis.

Acharonim raise the question of why religious Jews for centuries have abstained from entering even the outer section of Har HaBayis, where a tamei meis is permitted. Rav Eliezer Nachum suggests that the takanah of tum'as am ha'aretz applies. Chazal treated one not careful in hilchos tum'ah as a zav. Nowadays, we may all have that status, thus prohibiting entry. However, this is questionable, since am ha'aretz status may require actual violations, not mere passive tum'ah. Additionally, the gezeirah may only apply regarding contact with a chaver, not personal entry restrictions. Despite these arguments, it is important to follow the Rabbanut's position forbidding entry, as widespread leniency would likely lead to violations. There is also a din derabbanan distinguishing tum'as magga from טומאה מגופו. The Gemara in Bechoros (27a) teaches that rabbinic terumah is prohibited only to a Kohen with internal tum'ah, not tum'as magga. Thus, theoretically, a niddah could separate challah and give it to a minor Kohen or an immersed adult Kohen. However, the Shach records the Ashkenazic minhag that Kohanim refrain from eating challah today due to uncertain lineage.

Although mid'oraisa a Kohen may be believed regarding his own status, Chazal required independent verification due to concerns of yuchsin. In pressing circumstances, however, halachah reverts to the Torah standard, allowing reliance on self-identification, as seen in cases of gittin and chalitzah. Similarly, today most Kohanim rely on self-identification due to historical disruptions. Because this violates the rabbinic standard, the minhag developed for Kohanim to abstain from eating challah until lineage can be verified.

## **PARTIES, BALLGAMES AND MOVIES DURING SEFIRAH** **Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz**

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The Gemara, Yevamos 62, tells us that R' Akiva advises to continue to teach and amass talmidim even while advancing in age. This advice was based on his own experience in perpetuating Torah She'ba'al Peh (through his talmidim from later in life—Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, Rabbi Yosi, and Rabbi Elozor ben Shamua) even after 12,000 pairs of his original talmidim had died between Pesach and Shavuos for not being noheg kavod zeh lazeh, for not respecting one another. Again, in the time of the Crusades, terrible tragedies happened to the Jewish communities of the Rhine River Valley during the period between Pesach and Shavuos (Taz and Aruch HaShulchan, Orach Chayim 493). Some of these catastrophes are recorded in the Kinos that we recite on Tisha B'Av. Although the Gemara highlights the tragedy of the demise of so many great Torah scholars, the Gemara is not specific as to the precise timing of this tragedy (an ambiguity that has led to divergent practices as to which of the days of sefirah should be observed), nor how to properly mourn this tragedy. Importantly, for the purposes of this essay, the Gemara does not teach us of any specific mourning practices that should be observed during this period. The Shulchan Aruch, however, does highlight two particular practices of mourning that should be observed during this period. First, based on many sources in the Geonim, the Shulchan Aruch 493:1 says the minhag is not to get married during the mourning period of sefirah, but betrothal (le'ares ulekadash) is permitted. The Shulchan Aruch (493:2) adds that even if somebody performs nisuin (marriage), we don't punish him. Second, the Shulchan Aruch rules, based on the Tur (493), to refrain from haircuts during this time.

Is There a Difference between Sefirah & Bein Hametzarim? The closest parallel on the Jewish calendar to the period of sefirah is the period of "bein

hametzarim," commonly referred to as "The Three Weeks." However, there is some debate among poskim as to whether these two time periods are fundamentally similar. Rav Ovadya Yosef, Yechaveh Da'as 3:30, argues that these time periods are very different from each other. The days of bein hametzarim are fundamentally sad times, whereas Ramban says that the days of sefirah are like a Chol Hamoed of sorts, in that they bridge the holidays of Pesach and Shavuos. In other words, mourning practices are a natural fit during the bein hametzarim, whereas they are observed during sefirah to commemorate anomalous events that occurred. It therefore follows that saying Shehecheyanu and moving into a new house (especially in Eretz Yisrael where it is a mitzvah) would be prohibited during The Three Weeks but permissible during sefirah. Only forms of excessive simcha, such as weddings, haircuts and music, are forbidden during sefirah. Similarly, Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg, Tzitz Eliezer 18:41, also says that strictly speaking the only prohibited activities during sefirah are weddings, haircuts, and music. All other forms of mourning would be dependent on minhag (custom). He therefore concludes that as long as one doesn't have a minhag to the contrary one may say Shehecheyanu, make home improvements, go swimming, etc. Despite this view of poskim that distinguishes these two time periods, there are several indications that they are similar, and that the period of sefirah is not a fundamentally happy time. In fact, it is possible that the period of sefirah is a time of mourning and sadness even on a Biblical level. Moreinu HaRav Schachter shlit"a often mentions that the Zohar considers sefirah to be a Biblical period of mourning unrelated to the death of the students of Rabbi Akiva, and explains that it is because of this Biblical element of aveilus that we don't recite complete Hallel on Shevi'i shel Pesach in commemoration of the miracle of kriyas Yam Suf, even though we do recite Hallel Shaleim to commemorate other miracles (such as the miracles of Chanukah). Indeed, the Magen Avraham says that we should refrain from singing and dancing during the period of sefirah. The Mishnah Berurah 493:2 says "ain l'harbos b'simcha"—we should not increase simcha, but permits Shehecheyanu in a situation where it happened (im nizdamnu lo). There is a dispute among the Acharonim (quoted in the Dirshu edition of the Mishnah Berurah) as to whether the Mishnah Berurah would even allow saying a Shehecheyanu lechatchila. If the Mishnah Berurah does allow recitation of Shehecheyanu during sefirah, he clearly distinguishes between this period and that of bein hametzarim, but if the Mishnah Berurah in fact holds that we may not recite Shehecheyanu during sefirah, he may hold that they are similar. As a matter of halacha, Rav Soloveitchik, cited in Nefesh Harav pages 191–192, based on the Magen Avraham and his own analysis, says that we can assume the period of mourning is patterned after some actual halachos of aveilus, so all the laws that a mourner observes in the 12 months for a parent should apply. Rav Moshe Feinstein, Igros Moshe, Even HaEzer 1:98, also agrees that both time periods should probably be treated the same way, but in dealing with a party for a wedding, combines the possibility that sefirah is different from The Three Weeks with the idea that it is a seudas mitzvah to be lenient in a particular scenario.

Practical Application to Parties, Ballgames and Movies When it comes to the question of attending parties during sefirah, it would depend on which opinion one follows in the above discussion. If you hold like Rav Soloveitchik, it is prohibited to have any sort of simchas merei'us (social party) even without music. If you hold like Rav Ovadya, it should be permissible. If you hold like Rav Moshe, you would need additional considerations for leniency such as a mitzvah purpose. However, the precise definition of a party is not so clear. It is difficult, for example, to clearly define at what point a social gathering moves from a small meal with friends into the category of a full-blown party. Moreinu Rav Schachter shlit"a thought that having one or two couples over for a barbecue is permissible during sefirah since that does not yet rise to the level of a "party," but more than that is a problem. A shul or yeshiva dinner, for example, involves many friends getting together and eating in large crowds. However, it would also have the leniency of mitzvah purpose so it should be permissible, according to Rav Moshe. Moreinu Rav Schachter shlit"a was once asked about an

Abraham Lincoln enthusiast attending a dinner with Lincoln scholars during sefirah. Rav Schachter thought that even Rav Soloveitchik would say it is permissible because it is an intellectual rather than a social event, since the majority of the attendees are non-Jews with whom the questioner has very little in common. One can argue that ballgames and movies are not similar to a party in that it is not a place to socialize with other people, but just to enjoy entertainment. However, Moreinu Rav Schachter shlit" a has said that according to Rav Soloveitchik, a ballgame would be considered a simchas merei'us and therefore prohibited during sefirah. The Rav held that since it is fun, it should be prohibited. Rav Aron Soloveitchik added that since your pleasure is enhanced by a larger crowd, it is prohibited. When it comes to attending movies (presuming that the movie is "kosher") at a theatre, Rav Soloveitchik thought it is prohibited because it is also for fun. However, Rav Aron Soloveitchik didn't think this counts as simchas merei'us since your pleasure isn't enhanced by a larger crowd.

Endnote: It should be noted that Rav Moshe Feinstein in his Igros Moshe, Chelek 8:4 YD:11 writes that going to theaters and stadiums does not fall into the prohibition of bechukoseihem lo telechu. However, he writes that one should not attend due to moshav letzim, bitul Torah, and other reasons. REITS Torah To-Go Series Pesach 5782

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**The Lesson of House Tzaraas: Nothing Is Your Stuff**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1377 – An In Vitro Fertilization Baby, Can You Do His Milah on Shabbos? Good Shabbos!

The Lesson of House Tzaraas: Nothing Is Your Stuff

The pasuk in Parshas Metzora says "When you arrive in the Land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I will place a tzaraas affliction upon a house in the land of your possession." (Vayikra 14:34). Parshiyos Tazria and Metzora deal with different types of tzaraas: tzaraas that appears on a person's body, tzaraas that appears on clothing, and tzaraas that appears on the walls of a house.

As the Torah describes, when such a blemish appears on the walls of a person's house, he comes to the kohen and he says, "k'nega" (something like a blemish) has appeared on the walls of my house." (Vayikra 14:35) The kohen instructs that the house be emptied out so that nothing is in the house when the kohen views the nega (lest everything in the house become tameh (impure) when he proclaims the house tameh).

The Kli Yakar points out several anomalies in the pesukim that describe this process. First, he asks why tzaraas habayis (house leprosy) is introduced with the words "When you come to the Land of Canaan?" Next, he points out that the follow-on phrase, "that I am giving to you as an inheritance" is totally superfluous. We already know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us Eretz Yisrael! Also, the repetition of the phrase "b'beis erez achuzaschem" (in the house of the land of your inheritance) at the end of the pasuk is redundant and unnecessary. Furthermore, why the switch in expressions from "asher Ani nosen lachem l'achuza" to "beis erez achuzaschem"? Finally, the Kli Yakar questions the expression at the beginning of the next pasuk: "U'ba asher lo habayis" (and the one to whom the house belongs will come). Who else is going to come? Of course, it is asher lo habayis (the owner of the house) who will be coming to the kohen with this problem!

The Kli Yakar refers to a Gemara (in Eruchin 16) that comments on the words "u'ba asher lo habayis" – that this refers to "mi shemeyached bayso lo" (someone who keeps his house for himself). In other words, the Gemara in Eruchin says that tzaraas comes for a variety of reasons. The most common reason is lashon harah (tale bearing). Another reason is gayvah (haughtiness). Specifically, tzaraas habayis comes for stinginess (tzorus ayin), when someone is unwilling to share his possessions.

The Ribono shel Olam knows how to take care of such a person who doesn't want to lend out anything to anyone. The Gemara there explains what happens to such a person: For example, his neighbor comes to him and says "Listen, can I borrow some folding chairs? I am making sheva brochos." He responds, "I don't have any folding chairs." Another neighbor comes and says, "Listen, my lawn mower broke. Do you mind if I borrow your lawn mower?" He responds, "I really don't have my own lawn mower. I have a service that mows my lawn." A third neighbor comes and says, "My wife had to take my car this morning. Can I borrow your car?" He responds, "It is in the shop" (when really it is in the garage). And so on and so forth. He doesn't lend out anything.

The Gemara says that the Ribono shel Olam knows how to 'fix' this type of person. It is not a vindictive punishment. The Torah wants to teach him a lesson – to not be so stingy. What happens? When a "nega appears to him in his house," before the kohen views the nega, the owner needs to take out every stitch of furniture and possession. Lo and behold, all the folding chairs and the lawn mower and the car are on the sidewalk in front of his house. The fellow is revealed to be a tzar ayin.

What lesson is the Ribono shel Olam trying to teach this person? The lesson is that "things are not yours!" Even when things are in a person's possession, that does not make them "his!" When Hashem gives a person possessions, they are not truly his – they are like a pikadon, a deposit entrusted to him. The person is supposed to share those possessions with others when others need them. This doesn't mean that someone is obligated to make his house or his possessions hefker, such that every Tom, Dick, or Harry who rolls down the street can have free reign over his property. Rather, it is what I like to call the principle of "prudent stewardship."

The Ribono shel Olam gave us all these things. We are the stewards of this property. So, when a 16-year-old who got his driver's license yesterday, asks to borrow your car, it is perfectly justifiable to say "No. You wreck your father's car first before I lend my car to you." That is prudent stewardship because a 16-year-old who just got his license yesterday probably does not know how to drive very well.

But in general, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu blesses a person with wealth, it is meant to be shared with others. Therefore, says the Kli Yakar, this is what the pasuk is emphasizing in so many ways. "When you come to Eretz Canaan THAT I GIVE YOU AS AN INHERITANCE." The emphasis is that I gave you this land. I gave you this house. I gave you these possessions. They are not yours!

People have the attitude "I bought this with my hard-earned money." This is all about "Kochi v'otzem yodi osoh li es hachayil hazeh" (My strength and the power of my hand made me this.) (Devorim 8:17). The person doesn't want to part with these things because this is his stuff! The Ribono shel Olam is trying to teach us "Nothing is your stuff!" The Ribono shel Olam gave you that money.

Again, your possessions are not hefker, but they are yours in order to help others when possible. That is why the pasuk emphasizes "that I gave to you as an achuzah" (inheritance). If you refuse to share, "I will place a tzaraas blemish upon beis erez achuzaschem." You said it is my house, my chairs, my lawn mower, mine, mine, mine. That is why the pasuk needs to emphasize "u'ba asher lo habayis." The person who says "it is MY house" needs to come to the kohen. This plague comes to him because he felt too strongly that the house and its possessions belonged solely to him. He is not the owner of these possessions. He is the custodian.

The kohen will order him to empty out his house. This way everyone sees the reality. The homeowner will then need to think "Why is this happening to me?" The Torah wants him to conclude that it was because he was being too stingy, too much of a tzar ayin, a person who doesn't want to share.

Complements are the Easiest and Cheapest Chessed Out There

The second insight I want to share also comes from Parshas Metzora. The Torah delineates the process of how a person who was a metzora becomes tahir (pure). The kohen goes out of the camp to visit the isolated metzora. If

he sees that the tzaraas has healed he orders two live kosher birds be taken for the metzora (as his purification offering) along with etz erez, u'shnee tola'as, v'ezov (cedar wood, crimson thread, and hyssop) (Vayikra 14:4). What are done with these two birds? One bird is slaughtered upon an earthenware vessel over spring water. The second bird is dipped into the blood of the slaughtered kosher bird. This blood is then sprinkled upon the metzora and the second bird is then sent out free over the open field. This treatment of the second bird is unique among all korbanos (sacrifices). This is the only korban (sacrifice) that is not slaughtered, but rather is sent away alive. Normally, shechita is an essential avodah for any korban! What is the symbolism of the fact that the second bird is sent away alive?

The Gemara (in Eruchin 16b) says the reason that birds are the appropriate korban (as opposed to animal offerings) for the metzora: "He performs a deed of chattering; therefore, the Torah said, 'Let him bring as an offering a chatterer.'" Tzaraas comes for the aveira of lashon horah (the aveira of a person who talks incessantly, and in the course of such conversation, he says evil about other people). Birds talk incessantly. They are constantly chirping. The Torah is trying to send the person a message: Your aveira was that you talked too much. Therefore, you bring birds to remind you of the incessant talking of which you were guilty. But why shecht one and send the other one away? The Zohar explains that the two birds represent different kinds of conversation: One is for 'bad speech' (what the Zohar calls 'lishna bisha,' i.e. – lashon harah) and one is for 'good speech' (what the Zohar calls 'lishna tava').

The Sefas Emes and others explain that when the Zohar speaks of "the aveira of lishna tava," it doesn't simply mean talking good. Rather, it is means refraining from talking good. When you can say something nice to a person, and when you know that a person is down and you are in a position to give him encouragement and cheer him up, but you hesitate to get involved and don't want to start a conversation, you refrain from offering "lishna tava." That is what the second bird offering is about.

Two offerings are brought: One for speaking negatively when you should have kept quiet, and one for not speaking when you should have spoken positively. And that is why one korban is shechted and one korban is sent away. One bird is shechted – you kill it! You stop speaking lashon harah. But the other bird that is sent away and lives is symbolic of that other type of conversation that you are supposed to engage in. You are not supposed to squelch it.

Rabbi Buchspan cites a Medrash Rabbah, which is actually a pasuk in Mishlei. The pasuk says, "Death and life are in the hands of the tongue" (Mishlei 18:21). The simple interpretation of that pasuk is that a person can literally be destroyed and ruined through speech. You can ruin a person's shidduch, you can ruin his business, and you can ruin his life with lashon harah. Speech is literally a matter of life or death. However, this Zohar provides us with a new insight into that pasuk. Mav'es (death) is when you speak lashon harah; chayim (life) is when you can, so to speak, resurrect the dead, i.e. – uplift a person's spirits by saying something positive, something nice to him. The pasuk doesn't mean that speech is a matter of life and death. It means there is speech that causes life and speech that causes death. Positive speech, chizuk, empathy and sympathy is the "lishna tava" that we are going to be held accountable for (not speaking).

The Medrash says on that pasuk: Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said to his servant: Go to the market and buy the best thing there! The servant came back with tongue. Tongue is among the most expensive types of meat. If you go to the deli and order yourself a pound of tongue, you will pay a fortune. What is better than tongue? Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel then told his servant: Go to the market and bring me back the worst thing there. Again, the servant came back with tongue.

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said to his servant, how can tongue be both the best thing in the market and the worst thing in the market at the same time? The servant responded – that is exactly correct. Tongue can be the best thing and it can be the worst thing; but he was not talking about sliced tongue. He was talking about what a person does with his own tongue.

A person recently came over to me and told me the following story: His son and daughter were shopping in Monsey before Pesach. They finished shopping, got back into the car ready to leave, and the son saw across the street a Rebbi he once had in yeshiva. He told his sister, "I just want to say 'Shalom' to my Rebbi and tell him how much I appreciate what he did for me." He went across the street, gave 'Shalom' to the Rebbi, came back across, and got back into the car.

The brother then remembered that he had to go into one more store. In the meantime, his sister saw her sixth grade English teacher walking down the street. She said to herself, "What my brother did is a nice idea. I am going to thank my English teacher for what she did for me." She got out of the car, walked over to her former teacher and said, "I want you to know that you taught me all that I know about English, and when I applied to a 'high-end Beis Yakov school' and I had to write an essay, it is because of what you taught me about the English language that I got in. My life has changed because I got into such a high-end Beis Yakov. Therefore, I want to thank you for being such a good English teacher."

A few days later, her parents got a note from that teacher telling them the following story:

I have been teaching for 37 years. When the school asked me if I wanted to come back next year to teach, I told my husband "I think I am finished with teaching. I have been teaching for 37 years. I don't think I am relating to the girls anymore. When you start teaching, you are maybe ten years older than your students. When you are in your sixties, you are forty years older than your students. I don't think I relate to the girls anymore. We don't need the income. I think I am going to tell the principal that I am ready to retire." She wrote in the note: I had to give my final answer to the school the next day. Just that day, your daughter came to me and told me that I made all the difference in her life. "Because of the way you taught me, I got into the right high school, etc., etc." The woman said "Because of that, I decided not to retire."

This is not only a story about hashgocha pratis. (This woman had to give an answer the next day whether she was going to continue teaching or not. She actually prayed to the Ribono shel Olam for a siman whether she should retire or not. Then this former student tells her this!) This is the meaning of the Zohar that we are going to be held accountable for both lishna bisha and lishna tava. One complement can make all the difference to a person. Here an adult woman made a life decision based on a complement from a sixth grader!

As I always say, "It costs nothing to give a complement. It is the easiest and cheapest chessed out there! I don't need to write a check. I don't need to go anywhere. Talk is cheap. With a little talk, you can bring the dead back to life!" That is what the Zohar means that we will be held accountable, not only for the lishna bisha but for lishna tava (that we didn't speak) as well. This explains the symbolism of the slaughtered bird and the bird that is sent away, and this explains the pasuk in Mishlei: "Life and death are in the hands of the tongue."

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Parashat Tazria Metzora  
 Kol Torah Tazria Metzora 2026/5786  
**Forgetting to Light Shabbat Candles**  
**By Rabbi Chaim Jachter**  
 The Case  
 One of America's top Poskim, Rav Asher Bush (Teshuvot Shoel BeShelomo 1:16), wrote a Teshuvah regarding a woman who forgot to light Neirots

Shabbat, but the electric lights were lit for Shabbat. The woman asked Rav Bush whether she must follow the Rama's ruling (O.C. 263:1) that a woman who forgets to light Neiroi Shabbat must light an additional candle every subsequent week. Significantly, the Rama's source is the Maharil, a late Ashkenazic Rishon who records Minhagim. Because this requirement to light an additional candle is a custom of later origin, there is room to treat it more lightly than if it were a full-fledged Halachah.

A simple explanation for this custom (see Mishnah Berurah 263:7) is that it is a fine (Kenas) for forgetting to light candles. The Kenas is a potent reminder to light candles every week. A more esoteric explanation is that Neiroi Shabbat serve as a Tikun (reparation) for Chavah's sin of eating from the Eitz HaDa'at. Lighting candles brings light into the world, which replaces the light that was removed when Chavah sinned.

The consensus of Poskim regards electricity as acceptable for Shabbat candles. Nonetheless, we must ask if electric lights lit without intention to fulfill the Mitzvah of Neiroi Shabbat nevertheless count towards her fulfillment of the Mitzvah.

#### Chovat HaBayit

Rav Bush seeks to demonstrate that the Mitzvah of Neiroi Shabbat can be fulfilled even if the woman does not light the candles. For example, if the woman is unable to light, her husband (or any other household member) is obligated to light. Lighting candles is an obligation incumbent upon the house (Chovat HaBayit), not upon the woman (Chovat HaGuf). Therefore, Poskim do not impose the Kenas if the husband lit, for the main purpose of Neiroi Shabbat—to illuminate the house for Shabbat—has been achieved. Similarly, if a woman remembers during Bein HaShemashot (Halachic twilight, approximately 20 minutes after sundown) that she did not light Neiroi Shabbat, she may instruct a non-Jew to light for her.

Thus, we see that the Neiroi Shabbat obligation is not focused on the actual lighting, but rather on having the house lit. Accordingly, since in our case the house was lit by electric lights for Shabbat, logically no Kenas is necessary, since the Mitzvah's purpose was fulfilled.

#### Lighting Early – Rabbeinu Tam vs. Rabbeinu Meshulam

Nevertheless, the scope of this principle is disputed. Tosafot (Shabbat 25b s.v. Chovah) present Rabbeinu Meshulam's view that if a candle was burning before Shabbat, there is no need to extinguish it and relight it for Neiroi Shabbat. Rabbeinu Meshulam feels that if the house is lit for Shabbat, there is no need to light a candle specifically for Neiroi Shabbat. According to this approach, the woman in Rav Bush's case fulfilled the Mitzvah of Neiroi Shabbat, for although she did not intend to light for Shabbat, the Mitzvah can be fulfilled without such intent if the house has light.

However, Tosafot also cite Rabbeinu Tam, who rejects Rabbeinu Meshulam, arguing that the candle must be extinguished and relit for Neiroi Shabbat.

Rabbeinu Tam believes that although it does not matter how the house became lit up, it must be illuminated for Shabbat. According to this position, the woman in our case fulfilled the Mitzvah only if she lit the electric lights with the intention of illuminating the house for Shabbat. The Rama (O.C. 263:4) codifies Rabbeinu Tam's view.

The Bi'ur Halacha (263:6 s.v. Bachurim) explains that there are two distinct aspects to Neiroi Shabbat. First, every person is required to light candles (Ma'aseh Hadlakah). Second, there must be light in every room that a person intends to use, such that no one's Oneg Shabbat will be disrupted by lack of light (Shalom Bayit). To fulfill the Mitzvah, both requirements must be met. In Rav Bush's case, the need for Shalom Bayit was met since the house was lit.

Rav Bush contends that even though the woman did not intend to fulfill the Mitzvah with the electric lights, she performed the requisite Ma'aseh Hadlakah. The Mishnah Berurah (263:20) rules that if a light was lit after Plag HaMinchah for the sake of illuminating the house for Shabbat, B'dieved the Mitzvah has been fulfilled even if there was no intent to accept Shabbat with this lighting. Rav Bush argues that if electric lights were lit after Plag HaMinchah, we can assume they were lit for the sake of Shabbat. Therefore,

the woman's lighting can be considered a Ma'aseh Hadlakah, meaning she fulfilled both requirements, and the Rama's Kenas would not apply.

#### Questioning Rav Bush

However, if a woman fulfills the Mitzvah via electric lights even without intention, how can she later light candles with a Berachah? Does this not violate the principle "Kol HaMitzvot Mevareich Aleihen Oveir LeAsiyatan"? The Berachah would seem to be in vain. Furthermore, the Rama records that women accept Shabbat when lighting candles. If the Mitzvah is fulfilled earlier, it should be forbidden to do Melachah afterward.

Rav Bush responds that all lights that illuminate the home enhance the Mitzvah. The primary fulfillment remains the candles on the table, and a Berachah may be recited on them. He cites the Rama's ruling that two women may light in the same place and each recite a Berachah, since additional light enhances the Mitzvah.

He further argues that Kabbalat Shabbat is tied to the Berachah, not the lighting itself. Thus, performing Melachah after turning on electric lights does not prove lack of intent.

#### The Pri Megadim's Stringency

Even if the Mitzvah was fulfilled, the Pri Megadim (263:3) extends the Kenas to a case where a woman lit fewer candles than usual. According to this, she would still need to add a candle weekly.

However, the Poskim debate whether to follow this stringency. The Bi'ur Halacha rejects extending the Kenas, invoking the principle "Chiddush Hu VeHavu DeLo Losif Alah." Many major authorities do not mention the Pri Megadim's extension, implying it was not widely accepted.

#### Other Rulings

Several contemporary Poskim address this case. Rav Ovadia Yosef (cited by Rav Yaakov Yosef) and Rav Hershel Schachter agree with Rav Bush that no Kenas applies if the house was lit.

Rav Shmuel Wosner disagrees, arguing that forgetting entirely should still trigger the Kenas. Rav Elazar Meir Teitz agrees that electric lights suffice for Shalom Bayit, but requires specific intent for Shabbat; otherwise, the Kenas applies.

#### Conclusion

Yalkut Yosef is even more lenient, ruling that no Kenas applies if the house was lit, regardless of intent or timing. Many Rabbanim follow this approach, including Rav Mordechai Willig. Since the Rama's Kenas is of later origin, they are lenient in its application, especially given the potential embarrassment it can cause.