

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR  
TAL



### DESIRES LIFE

In this week's Parasha we learn about the Metzora – a person who is afflicted and cast out of the camp because of the sin of slander.

The Midrash explains that the word Metzora can be read Motsi Shem Ra – referring to a person who has 'brought out a bad name' or slandered others.

Slander can be so bad; it can be the cause of death. Yet there is a secret antidote that can cause life.

Who doesn't want life? What would you give for life? How much would you be willing to spend? What if I was to reveal a secret that can guarantee you life? Not just for one hundred and twenty years, of course. I'm talking eternal life! How much would you be inclined to invest?

Before we get there, did you know that it is possible to acquire (Chas VeShalom) Gehinom twice?!

The Gemara (Yuma 72b) cites Rava's warning to his students: "I beg you, do not acquire Gehinom twice". How does one acquire Gehinom twice? By foregoing life in this world and giving up life in the next world.

Rashi explains that this can happen when one toils in Torah yet does not observe it. One can, for example, sit and learn the entire day, only to leave the Beit Midrash during his break and speak Lashon Hara.

The Chovot Halevavot (Shaar Hachnia perek 7) relates that, when one speaks Lashon Hara about another, he "merits" his friend's sins being transferred to him, and his own Mitsvot being transferred to the one who was the object of his Lashon Hara. By spending his time learning Torah, he did not enjoy what this world had to offer, and by speaking Lashon Hara afterwards, any merit he may have received from his learning and performance of Mitsvot were given to the other person, thereby forfeiting his share in the next world - he has thereby inherited two Gehinoms!!

What about the secret of life, how can we earn eternity in both worlds?

The Midrash on our Parasha reveals the secret: "A certain peddler once peddled his wares in the villages around Tzipori. He called out, 'Who wants to buy an elixir of life?!' Many people crowded around him to purchase his merchandise. Rabi Yannai was sitting and learning Torah in his house. He called to the peddler, 'Come up here and sell me what you have!'. Said the peddler: 'Neither you nor those like you need what I am selling.' Rabi Yannai entreated him, and the peddler went up to him. The peddler took out a Tehilim and showed him the verse, 'Who is the man who desires life, who loves days of seeing good?' What is written subsequently? 'Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit...(Tehilim 34:13-14).' Exclaimed Rabi Yannai, 'All my days I have read this verse, but I did not know what it meant until this peddler came and explained it to me!' (Vayikra Rabba 16:2)." ►

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### > UPCOMING EVENTS

Legendary Lag Baomer BBQ  
14<sup>TH</sup> May at 7.45pm (*more info online*)

### ” THE WEEKLY QUOTE

“I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do.”

### > MAZAL TOV TO

Eliyahu Nissim and Chava Leah Hanan on their engagement.

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Desires life  
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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This Midrash seems hard to understand. What exactly was the peddler selling, and did Rabi Yannai not understand the literal meaning of this verse?

The Maharzu (Rav Zev Wolf Einhorn, in his commentary on the Midrash) explains that Lashon Hara is not like all other sins. Most sins can be dealt with on an individual basis. This is because most sins are individual -- i.e. isolated instances of evil. But regarding Lashon Hara, the Gemara affirms that "Everyone is guilty of Lashon Hara" (Bava Batra 165a). It is like a plague and nobody is immune.

It is powerful and thus needs a powerful antidote.

This is what the peddler taught Rabi Yannai. It is not sufficient to deal with Lashon Hara on a one-to-one basis. Not only must one try daily not to speak it, but more than that, he must encourage others not to speak. By publicising its potency and power to take and give life, one helps fix any

wrong doing he might have caused in the past, and earns himself eternal life. However, believe it or not, to merit real life, it is not sufficient merely to guard one's tongue. There is one additional, vital ingredient, without which the recipe is seriously lacking. "Perhaps a person might say, 'I guarded my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit. Now let me spend the rest of my time sleeping!'" Thus the next verse says, 'Turn from evil and do good (Tehilim 34:15)!' 'Good' refers to learning Torah, as it says, 'For I have given you a good teaching, do not forsake my Torah (Mishlei 4:2)' (Avoda Zara 19b). We can thus understand why the peddler told Rabi Yannai, "Neither you nor those like you -- diligent students of Hashem's Torah -- need what I am selling." Not only are you guarding your tongue from speaking Lashon Hara, but you are using that same tongue to speak and do good.

The Chafetz Chaim once visited a potential supporter of the Yeshiva. The Chafetz Chaim

sensed the conversation was heading towards Lashon Hara. He noticed a telegram on the man's desk. "It seems as if you've rewritten this telegram a few times" he remarked. "Yes," said the man, "Every word costs me money. I've taken great care to write only what's necessary." The Chafetz Chaim responded, "If only people were so careful with the words they use as you are with your telegram." After that comment, you could be sure the man thought carefully about what he was going to say.

Our mouths make us human. Such a special gift! Yet, astoundingly, though most people are concerned with what they put in their mouths, they are thoroughly callous regarding what comes out. Not so the Torah Jew.

The more we channel our power of speech in the direction of Kedusha (holiness), the more alive we will be -- for now and forever more! ■

## RABBI AHARON GABBAY

DVAR  
TORAH



### AN EYE FOR AN EYE

The Torah states that the punishment for speaking lashon hara (slander) is for that individual to be removed to outside the camp and be left alone. Rashi is troubled with a simple question. We know that Hashem does all judgement with justice, one of the prime examples of this being to punish midah keneged midah, measure for measure. The obvious question that arises is, how can being expelled from the camp be a 'measure for measure' for speaking lashon hara? Surely, the correct punishment should be that Hashem will cause others to speak lashon hara about this individual. Rashi answers that when one speaks lashon hara they can cause disruption within families and friends causing them not to talk each other and in turn be separated from one and other. Therefore, Hashem places a person outside the camp to experience the same pain that this individual caused.

Rabenu Yonah in Sha'arei Teshuvah explores the idea of midah keneged midah. He explains that there is a prohibition in the Torah of ignoring a neighbour when they require help. Rabenu Yonah explains that this refers to seeing someone's property or item at threat or risk such as water leading to flood their field; one is required to prevent the damage. Not only that, but this also includes aiding your friend with advice or similar physical intervention. Says Rabenu Yonah, if one were to refrain from helping out his fellow when he has the full capabilities to help, Hashem will intervene and, midah keneged midah, reduce your capabilities of helping going forward. (*Sha'ar shlishi, letter ayin in Rabenu Yonah*)

The Mishnah in Avot states that one should judge his neighbour favourably. The simple explanation of this is that if you see your friend doing an act which could be interpreted as either a good or bad act, you should believe he is doing a good act. Rashi in Avot brings from the Gemara Shabbat (127b) that if one judges his friend favourably, then in heaven they will judge him favourably -- midah keneged midah. There is a logical flaw in this ideahowever. Let's imagine you see Reuven bite into what appears to be a cheeseburger. You, being unaware of the truth, are recommended to judge favourably and thus assume that Reuven has a medical

condition which halachically permits him to eat milk and meat. So too, the Gemara seems to be saying, when you subsequently proceed to go and eat a cheeseburger knowing full well that it is not kosher, in heaven, where they do know the truth, they will judge you favourably, midah keneged midah, and assume that you have a medical condition!?! Rabbi Chaim Friedlander brings light to the Gemara with a whole new understanding. When you see Reuven eating the cheeseburger, your correct immediate reaction ought to be to jump to a new mode of analysis, where you look for all things that could influence or cause this action not to be a fully intended sin. The subsequent midah keneged midah toward you will be that even when you are found guilty for eating a cheeseburger, in heaven they will look for reasons for you not to be completely at fault, and they will take weight off your punishment.

One should realise the tremendous involvement Hakadosh Baruch Hu has in our world. In our daily interactions with our surroundings there are numerous opportunities to grasp ways, such as midah keneged midah, to build on our Avodat Hashem. ■

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI MEIR HOROWITZ

THE DZIKOVER REBBE

Rabbi Meir Horowitz Zatzal was the son of Rabbi Eliezer Zatzal, the Dzikover Rebbe, who was the son of the holy Rabbi Naphtali of Ropshitz. In his youth, Rabbi Meir was known as a genius who could absorb raw information in an astonishing way. He worked in secret, elevating himself in Torah and Chassidut to such an extent that many said he was the pillar of Torah in his generation. After the death of his father, Rabbi Meir took upon himself the yoke of leading the community. Thousands gathered around him, and every Shabbat he had three tables at which he related his Torah insights. These talks were later printed in his Torah commentary Imrei Noam, a book that was accepted as authoritative throughout the Diaspora. All during his life, Rabbi Meir said that a person must live in order to know how to die. In fact something extraordinary is said to have happened just before he died. On Tammuz 8, 5637, he suddenly sat in his chair and said: "Today there will be a sign." A few moments later he said, "The soul is Yours and the body is Your work. Have pity on Your work." At that instant his soul departed in holiness and purity towards the light of life, a light reserved for the tzaddikim in the World to Come.

Rabbi Meir Horowitz left behind sons who were well-known tzaddikim, namely Rabbi Naphtali Chaim, Rabbi Yechiel, Rabbi Aaron, Rabbi Asher, Rabbi Tuvia, and Rabbi Yehoshua (who succeeded his father as the Dzikover Rebbe). Rabbi Meir's son-in-law was Rabbi Israel Hager, the Rebbe of Viznitz and author of Ahavat Israel. May his merit protect us all. ■



## HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO WEAR A SPORTS COAT OVER YOUR SHOULDERS ON SHABBAT IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN?

**If on a hot Shabbat afternoon a man wishes to wear his sports jacket over his shoulders, rather than with his arms through the sleeves, may he wear the jacket in this fashion through a public domain (without an Eruv)? Do we consider the jacket as being worn, or does this constitute carrying, which is forbidden in a public domain on Shabbat?**

The Gemara in Masechet Shabbat (58) addresses the case of a servant who misplaces the emblem his master had given him for identification, and fears that the master might interpret the emblem's absence as an attempt to rebel. The servant therefore wears his cloak in an unusual manner, over his shoulders, to conceal the area on his body where the emblem is normally worn. The Gemara establishes that if the servant walks through the public domain while wearing his cloak in this fashion he transgresses the Shabbat prohibition of carrying. Since he wears the cloak in a manner in which it is not normally worn, he is considered carrying, rather than wearing, the garment, and he thus violates Shabbat.

#### Would this ruling apply nowadays to a sports jacket worn over one's shoulders?

In the sefer, Shemirat Shabbat Ke'hilchata, in Perek 18, Halacha 4, it says that strictly speaking, one may wear a sports jacket over his shoulders in a public domain on Shabbat. Since many people customarily wear sports jackets in this fashion, it may be considered "Derech Malbush" – the conventional manner of wearing. Nevertheless, in the footnote, in s"k 24, better to be stringent because it may fall off and you might come to carry it.

Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul, however, in his work Or L'sion (vol. 2, perek 23, Halacha 7), ruled unequivocally that one may wear his sport jacket over his shoulders on Shabbat, given that this has become a normal manner of wearing a sports jacket. He adds (ibid, Halacha 8) that if a person goes to a Mikveh on Shabbat and wishes to bring a towel, he may "wear" the towel through a public domain by draping it over the shoulders the way we normally wear a Talit. Wearing a towel in this fashion is considered "Derech Malbush" and it may therefore be worn in this manner in a public domain on Shabbat.

**Summary:** One may wear a sports jacket over his shoulders in a public domain on Shabbat; similarly, one may wear a towel over his back like a Talit in a public domain on Shabbat. ■

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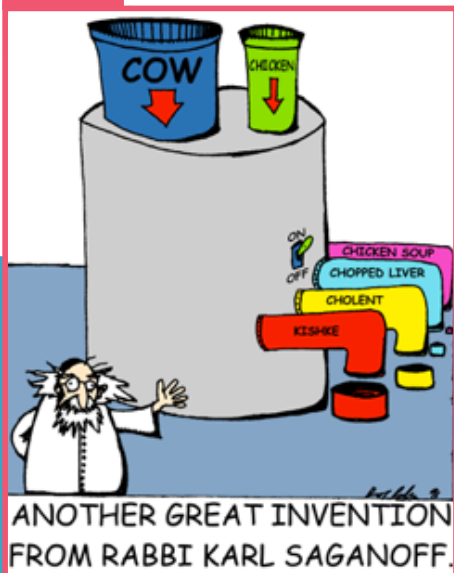
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### JOKE



- ❶ When does a woman who has given birth to a son go to the mikveh?
- ❷ After a woman gives birth, she is required to offer two types of offerings. Which are they?
- ❸ Which of the sacrifices does the woman offer first, the olah or the chatat?
- ❹ Who determines whether a person is a metzora tamei (person with ritually impure tzara'at) or is tahor?
- ❺ When a house is suspected of having tzara'at, a kohen commands that the affected stones be replaced and the house plastered. What is the law if the tzara'at:
  - a) returns and spreads; b) does not return; c) returns, but does not spread?
- ❻ When a person enters a house that has tzara'at, when do his clothes become tamei?

### Answer

❶ a) 14:44-45 - It is called "tzara'at mam'eret" and the house must be demolished; b) 14:48 - the house is pronounced tahor; c) 14:44 - The house must be demolished.  
 ❷ 14:46 - When he remains in the house long enough to eat a small meal.

- ❶ 12:2 - At the end of seven days.
- ❷ 12:6 - An olah and a chatat.
- ❸ 12:8 - The chatat.
- ❹ 13:2 - A kohen.

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