

The logo for TorahActionLife features the letters 'TA' in a large, stylized font. The 'T' is blue and the 'A' is purple. To the right of 'TA' is the text 'TorahActionLife' in a smaller, sans-serif font. The word 'Torah' is blue, 'Action' is dark blue, and 'Life' is pink. The background of the logo is divided into four colored squares: yellow, green, blue, and pink.

COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET



Don't Blame Me!

What is it that gets to these people that makes them think so convincingly that they are in the right? What allows them to turn the world inside out and believe in facts that don't exist?

The Nega Tsarat – was a seemingly physical affliction, yet its source was spiritual. Our sages explain (Erchin 16a) that one of the main causes of this affliction was the sin of Lashon Harah. The torah records that this Tsarat could afflict a person's house, clothes, and body. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 17:4) states, "First the Tsarat comes upon the house. If man repents, it requires the pulling out of the affected stones, if not, the house is pulled down. Then the Tsarat at comes upon one's clothing, if man repents, the clothing require washing, if not they are burnt. Then the Tsarat comes upon the

We are taught that Hashem sends hints to a person to change. At first it is subtle; it affects just the walls of the house. If the person doesn't get the hint, and doesn't repent, it will soon move to his clothes and eventually his own body.

Eventually the doctor couldn't take it anymore and he asked the rabbi: "Rabbi, I don't understand. You're not a

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doctor, how can you do all these things?"
 "No, all I meant was I also do that - I also only talk about *my own* good qualities!"
 Our Sages state that it is easy to find fault in others. "They" are always wrong, how could "they" do such a thing. Yet when we take a closer look we see that we too have our fair share of fault. It's just that we are too busy looking at everyone else's fault, deflecting attention from ourselves. This can be detrimental and lead to our short-sightedness.



RABBI ALAN GARBEL
SHENLEY UNITED SYNAGOGUE

Reflecting The Light - A Message From The Moon

This Shabbat is the fourth and final of the four special Shabbatot which help us

The Baal Shem Tov taught that another person is like a mirror--if we find ourselves noticing faults in others, it is because they exist within ourselves. The whole world is a mirror designed to show us how we can work on ourselves and our own deficiencies. It takes a great leader to own up to his mistakes, and change direction. Unfortunately in this day and age when there is so much financially at stake, some leaders are being carried away with their fantasies instead of owning up to the truth.

prepare for the festivals of Purim and Pesach. The special maffir that is read is from Exodus 12 is called HaChodesh ("the month"). The passage contains the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people; to sanctify the new moon and establishing Nissan as the first month of the Jewish calendar.

Out of all the 613 commandments, why was sanctifying the new month the first mitzvah?

One answer is that at this point in time the Jewish nation was being redeemed from slavery. The mitzvah of sanctifying the new month symbolizes and demonstrates our new freedom of being able to control time, as opposed to being slaves to Egypt and not in control of our own time.

Another answer is from the properties of the moon itself. The moon does not create its own light; rather, it reflects the light of the sun. Even during the blackness of night

What about us? Each one of us rules our own little world. There are times when Hashem sends us messages that are far, and seem to come closer. Don't ignore the messages. Let us take note, look around focus on ourselves as well as helping others to improve and work to better our lives and those around us.

when the sun can no longer be seen, the moon can still gather in hidden rays and reflect them earthward for mankind to find direction in the darkness of night.

Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so too are the Jewish people meant to reflect the "light" of God. The concept of a "Light unto the Nations" is to be a reflector of God's light. In this sense it is important to point out that we are not commanded to be a 'megaphone' to the nations telling people what to do, rather it is through our actions and good deeds as taught to us through the Torah that we act as an example of Godliness in this world.

Hence, it is quite logical and very meaningful that the first mitzvah to be given to the Jewish people should be the sanctification of the new moon. What better way is there to remind the Jewish people of the purpose for which they were freed from Egypt?



RABBI MEYER AMAR M.A.
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SENIOR KODESH TEACHER,
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Parasha Insights

Mazal tov are the words we usually hear when we hear the joyful news of new baby who has entered our world. Yet the Torah appears to view the birth as a negative experience as the Passuk states 'ISHA KI TASRIA VEYALDA ZACHAR VETOMAH SHIVAT YAMIM....TITMA - a woman who seeds and gives birth to a male she will be impure for 7 days'. Superficially it may look this way but there is a much deeper meaning here which reflects

the more serious spiritual aspects of the birth of a child. Until the point of birth the Neshama of the child was in a state of perfection, close to G-d, cushioned from the world's knocks and blows, but now as it enters our world, the shock on a physical and spiritual level is very real. The cry of the child as it enters the world reflects this dual shock.

Explains Rebi Moshe Martziano from Casablanca ZTL, the Passuk teaches us how to deal with the spiritual anti-climax that is occurring here. The soul being perfectly spiritual in nature needs to be fed the correct nutrients. It benefits from Torah learning, Mitzvah observance, Tefila and positive Character development. The analogy of the Passuk compares the soul to a woman in that it is the centre of the body as the woman is the centre of her house, this is the Isha of the Passuk. The body of the soul would be compared to the husband of the woman who both need to go out into the world in search of spirituality. This is the meaning of Tasria, searching for seeds to plant and grow. The seeds being the Torah learning, Mitzvah observance, Tefila and positive Character development. Veyalda Zachar refers to the effects of engaging in these spiritual deeds and creating angels

who speak for the benefit of the soul in heaven.

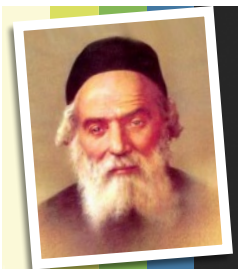
The Passuk continues to speak of the life of the soul in this world as lasting for 70 years, one day for each 10 years, Shivat yamim. During this time the Yetzer Hara will try and mislead the soul and give it cause to sin and be rendered impure and damaged with the temptations of beauty, taste and power. Titma - she will become impure.

On the eighth day, Ubayom hashmini a reference to the end of the 70 years of life in this world, the soul will receive it's Brit Mila where it's source of Tumah is removed so it can bask in the spiritual light of G-d receiving the reward it had earned in the battleground of the physical world of temptation. The lesson for the parent and ultimately the child is that once the child is born it is entering a battlefield. The child needs to be trained to deal with this in the slow but purposeful Jewish education it will receive from the parents. Yes, a big Mazaltov it is, that another wonderful child, a baby soldier is born in to G-d's army but a giant responsibility it is too.

May we be Zoche to internalise this message for ourselves and for our dear children.

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STORIES OF OUR CHACHAMIM CHOFETZ CHAIM

The Way He Guarded His Tongue

The way the Chofetz Chaim guarded his tongue is beyond comprehension. On a number of occasions he told me that, "Boruch Hashem, throughout my life, I was even careful to avoid *avak lashon hara*, about which the Gemara says, 'no one is saved from *avak loшон hora*.'"

In the history of our People, there was never any *sefer* written such as his *sefer Chofetz Chaim* in which he gathered every *halacha* from throughout the *poskim* regarding guarding one's speech. He once told me, "I did a great service for Klal Yisroel by writing the *sefer Chofetz*

Chaim. Without knowledge of the *halachos*, it would not be permitted to speak because *lashon hara* is an *issur di'oraysa*, a Torah mandated prohibition and therefore the *halacha* is that when there is doubt, one must rule stringently. A lack of knowledge regarding the *halachos* of *lashon hara* would therefore obligate people to refrain from speaking! Now, *boruch Hashem*, there is *sefer Chofetz Chaim* which anyone can learn and can understand what is prohibited and what is not..."

The most mind-boggling aspect of the Chofetz Chaim was that he was involved in almost every major communal issue facing Klal Yisroel in his time and nevertheless, he was able to say about himself that he had always been careful to avoid even *avak lashon hara*! The Chofetz Chaim was the living manifestation that the Torah that Hashem gave us is a *Toras*

Chaim, a living Torah that every Jew is capable of observing in its entirety.

His Brocha on Erev Yom Kippur

Once, before Yom Kippur he blessed me saying, "Reb Mendel, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* should help that you not become wealthy." At that moment a man standing behind me awaiting a *bracha* from the Chofetz Chaim fearfully blurted out, "Rebbi, what are you saying?" Turning to the man, the Chofetz Chaim said, "Hashem should bestow upon you all that you need, but for him (pointing to Rav Mendel) I am *bentching* him with the same exact *bracha* that I would want for myself."

The Chofetz Chaim would relate how Rav Shlomo Kluger, *zt"l*, begged that after his *petirah* he should be buried near the poor even if they were not *talmidei chochomim*, rather than be buried near the rich even if they were greater *talmidei chochomim*.

The Chofetz Chaim's Leichter

The *leichter* for the *neiros Shabbos* in the Chofetz Chaim's home were not made out of silver, nor did he have a silver *kaara* for Pesach, a silver *menorah* for Chanuka, a silver *esrog* box for Sukkos or even a silver *besomim* box. The only thing in the house made of silver was the Kiddush goblet which I [Rav Mendel who lived in the house of the Chofetz Chaim] received from Rav Elchonon Wasserman as a *chasuna* present. [Rav Elchonon explained that he had received that particular *kos* from his father-in-law for his *chasuna* and his father-in-law had received it from his father-in-law and thus the *becher* had been handed down for a number of generations.]

In the Chofetz Chaim's house they sat on *bentches*, not chairs. The Chofetz Chaim would say, "So many people sit on a bench that has only two legs, why then should an individual take a seat with four legs. Hashem's chair is not complete in our time of *golus*..."

Living with Mitzvos

1. Mentioned in both these *parshios* are the four people known as "*mechusar kippurim*", meaning that despite having immersed in the mikva their full *tehora* only comes after bringing their *korbonos*. These four are: a woman after childbirth; *metzora* and *zovim* and *zovos*.
2. *Negoim* can come on three places – houses, clothing and people.
3. Perhaps since *negoim* is a clear spiritual illness it therefore requires the tribe with *Kohanim*. They were selected to be the most spiritual as seen in them being allowed to work in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Since we are dealing with spiritual matters, it requires a spiritual announcement by a Kohen and not merely knowledge.
4. Two. There is a *metzora "musger"*, who is locked up to see what will happen to his *nega* that does not have definite signs of *tuma*. There is the *metzora "muchlet"* whose *nega* shows definite signs of *tuma* and is immediately sent outside the camp. (See the differences between them in the Mishna Megilla 8b.)
5. We find in the haftora of Parshas Metzora that four *Metzoroim* were together by the entrance gates and had a discussion, etc. We see from here that they can stick together with fellow *metzoroim* and only need to remain separate from everyone else inside the camp.
6. *Tzoraas* was a punishment that was special. It showed clearly the direct result of sin. This can only work for people who are on a high spiritual level who will take this message to heart and repent. However, nowadays we are on such a low spiritual level that we are almost all guilty of *Loshon Hora* and we would not be able to all be sent away! It is because of this lowly situation that this blessing in disguise of *tzoraas* was taken away from us. (See Ramban, 13:47 and Alshich, 13:2.)
7. The Ibn Ezra brings that in the pain of childbirth the woman may have sinned in thought requiring the *olah* and may have sworn verbally needing a *chatos*. Rabbeinu Bechai brings that it is for the sin of *chava* that involved thought and action and resulted in the punishment of pain by childbirth.

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