

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT TAZRIA

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

ALIVE IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT!

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 does not want life? What would you give for life? How much would you be willing to spend? What if I were to reveal a secret that can guarantee you life? Not just for one hundred and twenty years, of course. I am 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) Gehinam twice?!

The Gemara (Yuma 72b) cites Rava's warning to his students: "I beg you, do not acquire Gehinam twice". How does one acquire Gehinam 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 Chovat Halevavot (Shaar Habchina 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 Gehinams!!

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)."

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

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19:38pm
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20:43pm

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DVAR TORAH
Alive in this world & the next!
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil

DVAR TORAH
How to "do for others"
By Rabbi Yehonatan Salem

OUR CHAHAMIM
Rabbi Meir Leibish Zatzal

HALACHOT
By Rabbi Eli Mansour

KIDS ZONE
Quiz & Story

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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 wrongdoing 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)' (Avodah 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 conversa-

tion was heading towards Lashon Harah. 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 have taken great care to write only what is 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 YEHONATAN SALEM

HOW TO "DO FOR OTHERS"

At the beginning of the perashah the Torah teaches us the laws concerning a lady who gives birth. After waiting the prescribed time for purification, she must bring an offering of a sheep, and a dove or a pigeon.

The Baal Haturim makes the following observation. Everywhere else in the Torah, when it says that doves or pigeons may be used for a required offering, pigeons are mentioned before doves. Here however, the Torah specifies the dove first. What is the reason for this? He answers that everywhere else offerings require bringing two birds of the same kind. Here, however, the mother who gave birth is only required to bring one bird. It is a known fact that if a dove loses its mate, it will find another one. A pigeon, however, will mourn its first mate forever and will not seek another partner. Hence, the Torah states that since only one bird is offered, it is

preferable to take a species that will mate again, as opposed to one that will not.

This teaches us an important concept. When deciding whether a certain action should be taken, firstly, check if it is correct and appropriate. Then, ascertain the correct way of doing it, bearing in mind one's motives and the sensitivities of the parties involved. Even if ulterior motives play a part in one's decision, nevertheless, this does not disqualify the act. For example, if a person wishes to give charity in order to receive honour, although this may not be the highest level of giving, it is nonetheless a commendable act. If however, the intended action will cause one to act inappropriately or harm someone else, e.g. standing on someone else's toes in order to achieve one's aim, although essentially the action is a positive one, it is nevertheless not justified. I remember once hearing about a host who told a guest: "You should come more often. My wife prepares such delicious food when we have guests!"

The Gemara states that if by giving

charity the recipient will become embarrassed, it is better not to give. Similarly, although it is a mitzvah to rebuke a wrongdoer, nevertheless, reprimanding him in public for a transgression that he committed, thereby causing him humiliation is no mitzvah. The objective of reprimanding one's fellow man is to help him better his ways. If one acts incorrectly by embarrassing him, even if he happens to better himself, the method used is unacceptable. We must remember that according to the Torah "ends do not justify the means". The way to achieve something positive is only through means that do not harm anyone.

Before we embark on a positive action, let us consider the best way to do it. Let us evaluate the ramifications of our actions and consider how other people will be affected by it. If we say something to our friend in a friendly and thought-out way, he will be encouraged and come away with a smile, as opposed to if we say it in a way or in a tone of voice that will break him.

Shabbat shalom



OUR CHAHAMIM

Rabbi Meir Leibush Zatzal • "The Malbim"

Rav Meir Leibush ben Yechiel Michel (the Malbim) is universally known in all Jewish communities as one of the great commentators of the Bible. Almost all Jewish homes possess his commentary. He was a genius, an extraordinary man who knew every field of Torah perfectly well. He was 20 years old when he was given the title "The Prince of Torah," and all the great of his era regarded him with great esteem.

Rabbi Yossef Dov Soloveitchik, the Rav of Brisk, once said that the Malbim's explanation of the verse that states, "When I shall seize the appointed time, I shall judge with fairness. The earth and all its inhabitants are melted. I have firmly established its pillars" (Psalms 75:3-4) would have been impossible for a man to formulate unless Ruach Hakodesh rested on him. The Malbim began to write his commentaries and explanations on the Bible and Talmud at the age of 13. In the introduction to his book Artsot

HaHaim he wrote, "When I was 13 years old, as a solitary bird in the nest of wisdom, my soul was awakened to the enchanting voice of the love of study, a voice that sang in my ear. The spirit of Torah that had always accompanied my fathers had awoken my mind from its sleep, and thus the rapid plume of a scribe was in my right hand. I wrote and brought forth new explanations, and the hand of G-d gave me strength."

Due to his great reputation in Torah and the strength yet gentleness of his words, he was accepted as the Rabbi of Warsaw in 1839. He stayed there seven years, during which time he established numerous organizations aimed at strengthening religious life. During the course of his life, he was appointed as Rabbi of different communities: Kempen, Prussia (for his contemporaries, he was known as "the Kempener"); Bucharest, the capital of Romania; Koenigsberg, Germany; and Mohilev, Russia. His many travels from town to town and from country to

country testified to the fact that he found no satisfaction in the rabbinate, for by his nature he was courageous. He was a man of truth, a man with firm opinions, and a man who never flattered those who could help him. He fought against the atheists who introduced "reform" into religion, as well as against the rich who did not give enough for the poor. All this brought him many enemies, men who pursued him without giving him rest. He was also denounced as an "enemy of the state," however Rabbi Meir Leibush did not let himself be distressed by this, and he continued to lead the fight for truth and honesty. Those people who understood the purity of his heart and his way of life loved him enormously. They came to see him in droves in order to hear his talks and to take advantage of his holy words.

The Malbim lived 69 years, and his name is forever enshrined among the great commentators of the Bible.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

RECITING KADDISH FOR A PARENT

It is customary for one to recite Kaddish as a source of merit for one's deceased parent after the parent's passing, even if the parent was exceedingly righteous. Hacham Ovadia Yosef explains in Halichot Olam (vol. 7, p. 508; listen to audio recording for precise citation) that although the parent certainly earned Gan Eden through his piety, nevertheless, the child's recitation of Kaddish has the ability to elevate the parent's soul to even greater heights in Gan Eden.

When Yahrzeit is observed for a parent, the child begins reciting Kaddish at Arbit on Friday night before the day of the Yahrzeit, through Minha on the day of the Yahrzeit. Hacham Ovadia writes that

if the Yahrzeit falls on Shabbat, then one begins reciting Kaddish on Friday night the week before the Yahrzeit, and thus ends up reciting Kaddish on two Shabbatot.

Hacham Ovadia notes that it is preferable when observing a Yahrzeit to receive the Aliya of Maftir. Based on the Zohar, and the Ben Ish Hai (Toldot, Shana Sheniya, 21), he explains that the Aliya of Maftir brings greater satisfaction to the departed parent's soul than other Aliyot, even the Aliya of "Mashlim," which includes a Kaddish recitation.

Hacham Ovadia in this context addresses the unusual situation of a father who does not want his son to recite Kaddish after the passing of the son's mother, thinking that this might bring "bad luck" and cause the father to die. Of course, this is not true at all, but nevertheless, Hacham Ovadia rules that the son in this case is obligated to obey

his father's wish, and should not recite Kaddish. He should instead spend extra time learning Torah as a source of merit for his mother's soul.

Summary: One recites Kaddish after a parent's passing, Heaven forbid, even if the parent was very righteous, in order to elevate the parent's soul to even greater heights. Each year after a parent's passing, one recites Kaddish from the Friday night before the Yahrzeit through Minha of the Yahrzeit, and if the Yahrzeit falls on Shabbat, then he begins Friday night the previous week. One observing a Yahrzeit should try to receive the Aliya of Maftir. If one's father asks him not to recite Kaddish after his mother's passing, he should obey his father's wish and spend extra time learning Torah in place of reciting Kaddish.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Tazria

The Torah commands a woman to bring a korban after the birth of a child. A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The Torah introduces the phenomenon of tzara'at (often mistranslated as leprosy) – a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken a person to spiritual failures. A kohen must be

consulted to determine whether a particular mark is tzara'at or not. The kohen isolates the sufferer for a week. If the malady remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the kohen decides the person's status. The Torah describes the different forms of tzara'at. One whose tzara'at is confirmed wears torn clothing,

does not cut his hair, and must alert others that he is ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of tzara'at on clothing is described in detail.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



1 On which days is a kohen not permitted to give a ruling on tzara'at?

13:14 - During the festivals; and ruling on a groom during the seven days of feasting after the marriage.

2 In areas of the body where collections of hair grow (e.g., the head or beard), what color hair is indicative of ritual impurity?

13:29 - Golden.

3 In areas of the body where collections of hair grow, what color hair is indicative of purity?

13:37 - Any color other than golden.

4 If the kohen intentionally or unintentionally pronounces a tamei person "tahor," what is that person's status?

13:37 - He remains tamei.

5 What signs of mourning must a metzora display?

13:45 - He must tear his garments, let his hair grow wild, and cover his lips with his garment.

STORY TIME!

THE TRICKSTER

"Please, my friend, come. You look like a stranger in town." The stranger was very happy to be welcomed by such a friendly individual. He indeed was visiting in town and needed a place to eat and stay. Little did he know that his "friend" was really a trickster. "Come, please let me show you around town and help you get settled. I will arrange a place for you to sleep tonight. But first, I am sure that you are hungry. Please, come with me for a bite to eat." The trickster proceeded to take the stranger to a fancy restaurant. They entered and were shown to their seats. "Please order whatever you like," said the trickster. "I will pay for everything." We will work out the bill some other time. The items listed on the menu all sounded delicious and were very expensive. "This man is very generous," thought the stranger. "It is my good fortune that I met him." The two men proceeded to order a sumptuous meal, complete from soup to nuts. The food was served in all of its courses, and they enjoyed themselves tremendously. As they finished eating and drinking, the trickster excused himself for a few minutes. He slipped away out the back door of the restaurant. The waiter then came and presented the guest with a huge bill. "Yes, just a moment. My host will be returning to pay this." They waited and waited, but the trickster was nowhere to be found. The owner of the restaurant came to help the waiter. "But, but, my friend was supposed to pay this bill," the man pleaded. "Your friend is not here, but you are. You ate this food and must pay for it." The guest, realizing that he had been tricked, sadly took out his wallet and paid the expensive bill for the meal. This is a parable from the Chofetz Chaim zt"l. What is the message? While the guest was eating, he thought the trickster was his friend. It was only after the meal that he realized that he was only out to harm him. So too with *loshon hora*. Someone may want to tell you the deepest secrets that he knows about other people. How honored and flattered you feel to be so close to a person who will share secrets with you. However, after 120 years we will see that your closeness to such a person caused you to hear *loshon hora*. That "friendship" just like the meal at the restaurant, will cause you a great loss. Don't let the trickster fool you. Be smart and stay away from "friends" like the trickster.