



In This Issue

[Shabbaton Wrap-Up](#)

[HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Metzora](#)

[Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Shimon Peretz](#)

[Petuchei Chotam on Parshat Metzora](#)

[Talk about talking \(in shul\)](#)

[Dedication, Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List](#)

[Join Our List](#)

Parshat Metzora

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Hakarat Hatov

Dear All,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for all of your efforts in making this year's Shabbaton a huge success. Although the ultimate hakarat hatov goes to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, we are obligated to thank His many shlichim - each of you whom we wish to thank from the bottom of our hearts. The Shabbaton was amazing and was just what we all needed and we could not have done it without the help and advice of each and every one of you.

-Laizer Albert (5767-68) & Sam Bienenfeld (5767-68)
Shabbaton Coordinators

Be Good Program

This Sunday, April 10th, I"YH, The Be Good Project, in memory of Asher Strobel (5769) z"l, is starting off with their first chessed mission!

At 1:30 PM, they will be meeting by YU, where they will be dividing into groups. Some will clean homes for pesach and the others will be visiting the sick at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

Please RSVP so that we have an idea of how many people are coming and how we can divide the groups.

Please RSVP to Begoodprogram@gmail.com.

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Shabbaton Wrap-Up by Eytan Austein (5769-70)

This past Shabbat (Parshat Tazria/HaChodesh) more than 200 Netiv alumni gathered in Woodmere, New York for the annual Netiv Shabbaton. The Shabbat began with some words of welcome from our Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Bina Shlit"a followed by a Netiv-style Kabbalat Shabbat. In addition to the Rosh Yeshiva, many of our Rebbeim flew in for Shabbat: HaRav Chizkiyahu Nebenzahl, HaRav Amos Luban, HaRav Yoel Rackovsky, HaRav Chanan Bina, HaRav Ami Merzel. HaRav John Krug also joined us. The Rebbeim made themselves available for schmoozing throughout the night and Shabbat afternoon, speaking with the guys and catching up one-on-one. We were *zoche* to hear *divrei Torah* and other *divrei chizzuk* from all of the Rebbeim.

After Shabbat lunch, Rav Bina and the other Rebbeim led a panel on dating, marriage, and *shalom bayit*.

Rav Bina's *drasha* during Seudah Shlishit, as usual, gave us tremendous *chizzuk*, trying to help us remain strong while in college and working.

Overall the Shabbaton was far more than a get-together, it gave us all much-needed *chizuk* and a chance to recharge our batteries and strengthen our connection with our Rebbeim.

HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Metzora

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.

Printer Friendly Sicha



PARSHAT METZORA - "KEEP YOUR MOUTH HOLY"

TZARAAT - ONLY CURED BY THE KOHEN

Last week and this week's Torah reading are devoted to the laws of "tzaraat". We learn how one who is inflicted with "tzaraat" must appear before the Kohen who then rules in accordance with the laws outlined in the Torah when the Torah requires him to declare the person "tahor", he must rule "tahor", and when the Halacha mandates that he is "tamei", the Kohen must rule him "tamei". No ruling takes effect without the psak (Halachic deliberation) and corresponding declaration by the Kohen.

Only the Kohen can "cure" the Metzorah. We believe that all illnesses are heavenly ordained ("hakol bidei Shamayim" everything is in the hand of heaven" (Brachot 33b)). Chazal tell us "a person cannot turn his finger downward without a directive from above (Chullin 7b) even hurting one's finger is a "psak" from Heaven. In spite of this, one who is ill may go to a doctor. Chazal learn this from the verse: "and he shall provide for healing" (Shmot 21:19) "from here we may derive that authority was given to a physician to offer treatment" (Berachot 60a). Not only is the doctor permitted to treat a person, it is a Mitzvah for him to do his utmost to restore the health of the patient. We do not say to the doctor "Hashem made him ill, what right do you have to change a heavenly ordained decree?" On the contrary the doctor is commanded to heal him! Although Chazal tell us that a wise doctor is one who knows how to heal not only through medical means but through teaching Torah as well, the fact is that when a person enters the hospital he does not inquire as to whether or not the doctor is well-versed in Shas and Poskim, we are only interested in his level of medical expertise. Although the Ramban tells us that those who possess a very high level of bitachon should not go to the doctor to be healed but should rather rely on their bitachon, most people do not fall under this category.

When it comes to "tzaraat", however, we are prohibited from seeking the help of a doctor, only the Kohen will do: "If a tzaraat affliction will be in a person, he shall be brought to the Kohen" (Vayikra 13:9). Not only is the afflicted person obligated to go to the Kohen, but he may not attempt to heal his tzaraat without the Kohen, as the Torah commands us: "beware of a tzaraat affliction, to be very careful and to act; according to everything that the Kohanim, the Levites, shall teach you as I have commanded them you shall be careful to perform" (Devarim 24:8). Chazal teach us that attempting to heal the tzaraat by other means is punishable with malkut (see Makkot 22a). The cure can only be brought about by the Kohen who must precisely follow the dictates of the Torah the physician here has no authority to heal.

REVELATION/CONCEALMENT OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

We know that Hashem sees all and is All-Powerful, yet He does not always wish to reveal this to us this leaves the choice of whether or not to believe in Hashem up to us. Clearly, Hashem wants us to believe, but His Divine Providence is not apparent to all. In this instance, however, with regard to healing the affliction of tzaraat, It is Hashem's desire that His Divine Providence be revealed no "natural" means of healing may be used, one may only do as the Torah dictates. The cure includes tshuva, tefilla, and following the instructions of the Kohen nothing else. In holy matters as well, Hashem does not always reveal His Providence to us, yet there are specific times and places in which His "hashgacha" is clear to all. In most cases, however, Hashem wishes to give us the free choice of whether to believe, or to be an "apikores", G-d forbid.

According to some commentaries claim that this was where Nadav and Avihu erred. Last week's parsha related to us their tragic deaths which resulted from their having brought an "alien fire" to light the Altar. Although the fire for the altar always came from Heaven, Hashem commanded the Kohanim on duty to bring a natural fire to burn the offerings. On this special day in which the Mishkan was dedicated, however, Hashem wished to reveal His "hashgacha" and to demonstrate that the fire came about solely in response to the tefillot of Moshe and Aharon: "Moshe and Aharon came to the Tent of Meeting, and they went out and they blessed the people and the glory of Hashem appeared to the entire people! A fire went forth before Hashem and consumed upon the Altar" (Vayikra 9:23-24). At this juncture, Hashem wished to show all the observers that it is His fire which burns the offerings and not one that is lit by "natural" means. Nadav and Avihu did not realize this. They thought that on this day as on any other day, they were supposed to bring their own fire. They therefore did not ask Moshe Rabenu whether Hashem perhaps wished to demonstrate display His special fire on this special day of dedication.

In Egypt too, Hashem's hashgacha was also clear to all: we all saw that a non-Jew drank blood while a Jew drank water, as well as all the other great miracles which took place: "so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt and My signs that I placed among them that you may know that I am Hashem" (Shmot 10:2). In general, however, Hashem's Divine Providence is not readily apparent - we do not always see wicked people suffering and the tzaddikim prospering. Even while in Egypt, the Jewish people suffered greatly for many long years until Moshe Rabenu and Aharon HaKohen came along and brought all the plagues upon Pharaoh. We see that Hashem only reveals His hashgacha at specific times and places.

"REMEMBER WHAT HASHEM DID TO MIRIAM"

There are seven sins which Chazal tell us are punishable with the affliction of tzaraat. The most common of these is "one who speaks loshon hara" (Erchin 15b). The Torah tells us "remember what Hashem your G-d did to Miriam on the way, when you were leaving Egypt" (Devarim 24:9). There is a debate among the Rishonim whether remembering this incident is a Mitzvat Asei (positive commandment) or not. The Rambam does not include this in his list of positive commandments. It appears that Rashi too did not view this remembrance as a Mitzvat Asei - "if you wish to take care that you not be stricken with tzaraat do not speak loshon hara, remember what was done to Miriam who spoke against her brother Moshe and was stricken with afflictions of tzaraat" (Rashi's commentary to Devarim 24:9). Rashi is implying here that this is not a positive commandment, the Torah is rather offering us sound advice - if you wish to protect yourself from being afflicted with tzaraat, remember what happened to Miriam and then you will guard your tongue from speaking loshon hara and thus not be afflicted. The Ramban, on the other hand, lists this remembrance among the positive Mitzvot: "we are commanded to verbally remember and to take to heart what Hashem did to Miriam when she spoke of her brother, despite her being a prophetess, as a means of distancing ourselves from speaking loshon hara" (Ramban's appendix to the Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot - Mitzvah 7).

LOSHON HARA OF A TZADDIK

We must realize of course that for someone on the level of the righteous Miriam even an extremely minor matter can be classified as loshon hara and she was therefore punished for it. We can derive from here a "kal vachomer" regarding the severity of the "regular" loshon hara that we speak. The Rambam elaborates: "contemplate what happened to Miriam the prophetess who spoke about her younger brother whom she herself raised and for whom she endangered her life in order to save him from the sea. She did not actually say anything negative about him, rather she mistakenly equated him with other prophets. In addition, Moshe was not insulted by her words, as the Torah tells us when recounting this incident 'Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble' (Bamidbar 12:3). Despite all this, she was immediately afflicted with tzaraat. How much more serious are the massive amounts of loshon hara spoken by fools and evil people!" (Rambam Hilchot Tumat Tzaraat 16:10). Chazal tell us that the word "metzora" comes from "motzi ra", saying bad things about people (see Erchin 15b). We should learn from this incident that it is better to be silent than to say anything negative about another person.

What, after all did Miriam say? Did she say anything negative about Moshe Rabenu? All she said was "was it only to Moshe that Hashem spoke? Did He not speak to us as well?" (Bamidbar 12:2). We (Aharon and Miriam) are also prophets just as Moshe is! Was this not true, were they not all prophets of Hashem? Why was Hashem so angry with her that He inflicted her with tzaraat? She was unaware of the fundamental difference of Moshe Rabenu's level of prophecy as compared to that of herself and Aharon. Hashem, in fact, explains this matter to her later on: "If there shall be prophets among you, in a vision shall I, Hashem make Myself known to him; in a dream shall I speak with him. Not so is My servant Moshe; in My entire house he is the trusted one. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him, in a clear vision and not in riddles, at the image of Hashem does he gaze" (Bamidbar 12:6-8).

Miriam's actions were probable "beshogeg" unintentional, yet Hashem was still angry with her for she should have understood that if Hashem chose Moshe to go to Pharaoh and to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt and onward to Har Sinai to receive the Torah, then he must be on a higher level than everyone else, including Miriam and Aharon. For a "tzaddek" on the level of Miriam, this is classified as loshon hara she was punished for not properly perceiving the high level which Moshe Rabenu was on.

DEPARTURE OF THE CLOUD

The Torah tells us that when Hashem was about to punish Miriam for having spoken loshon hara: "The cloud had departed from atop the Tent, and behold! Miriam was afflicted with tzaraat" (Bamidbar 12:10). Rashi comments that the cloud departed because Hashem did not wish to punish Miriam as long as His Divine Presence was still present: "this can be compared to a king who said to (his son's) teacher, 'punish my son harshly but do not punish him harshly until I leave you, for I have pity on him'". Hashem therefore removed His Divine Presence from the tent, and only later on was Miriam punished.

Another reason offered is that the cloud is the embodiment of the Glory of the Shchina. Miriam was about to be afflicted with tzaraat which would render her impure, and it would be inappropriate for one who is tamei to enter a location in which the Shchina is present. The cloud therefore had to depart in order that Miriam be punished with tzaraat. We find a similar idea with our matriarch Sarah. The angel asked Avraham "where is Sarah your wife?" (Bereishit 18:9), to which Avraham's response was "'behold! - in the tent'" (ibid.). The Torah immediately tells us: "Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent"(ibid. 10). Why was Sarah first "in the tent" and a moment later she was "at the entrance of the tent"? One explanation given is that Avraham Avinu's tent was the camp of the Shchina - "a cloud would be stationed over the tent" (Rashi Bereishit 24:67). Given that at that point "Sarah had begun menstruating for the course of younger women returned to her on that day" (Rashi Bereishit 18:8), she was forced to exit the tent and stand at its entrance. By the same token, because Miriam was about to become afflicted with the tumah of tzaraat, the cloud had to depart so that Miriam would not find herself under the cloud in a state of impurity.

Another explanation offered for the departure of the cloud is that the halacha forbids inspection of "negaim" on a cloudy day (see Mishna Negaim, perek 2, Mishna 2), because it is impossible to truly distinguish whether the spots fall under one of the four categories of sitting that would render one tamei. The fact is that in the case of Miriam there was no need for such a determination for Hashem Himself had already decreed "let her be quarantined outside the camp" (Bamidbar 12:14), as Chazal tell us "the Holy One Blessed is He accorded great honor to Miriam at that time by saying: 'I am a Kohen, I am confining her, I am confirming her, and I will release her'"(Zevachim 102a). Hashem, however, acted in accordance with the

Torah laws He had handed down to us. If the Torah forbids confirming a "negah" on a cloudy day, then Hashem also does not confirm a "negah" on a cloudy day, therefore the cloud had to depart for Hashem to "determine", so to speak, that Miriam's "negah" required being quarantined.

Perhaps we can offer an additional explanation for the cloud departing. What happened during Miriam's quarantine? "Miriam was quarantined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in" (Bamidbar 12:15). Why did the people not journey during Miriam's confinement? "The Omnipresent accorded her this honor, because of one hour that she lingered for Moshe when he was cast in the river, as it says 'and his sister stationed herself at a distance' (Shmot 2:4)" (Rashi Bamidbar 12:15). As reward for that one hour that Miriam waited alone for Moshe at the edge of the river when she was a young child, six hundred thousand Jewish men in addition to the many women and children waited not one hour, but seven days, for her return to the camp! The only way to stress the reason for the delay was to remove the cloud. So long as the cloud remained above the tent, it was not clear that the reason the people were not proceeding was because they were awaiting Miriam's return. As the Torah teaches previously "in accordance with the lifting of the cloud from atop the Tent, afterwards the Children of Israel would journey, and in the place where the cloud would rest, there the Children of Israel would encamp. According to the word of Hashem would the Children of Israel journey, and according to the word of Hashem would they encamp; all the days that the cloud would rest upon the Tabernacle they would encamp. When the cloud lingered upon the Tabernacle many days, the Children of Israel would maintain the charge of Hashem and would not journey" (Bamidbar 9:17-19). One could perhaps think that the reason that Bnei Yisrael were not proceeding with their journey was not because they were waiting for Miriam but because the cloud had not risen. Therefore before Miriam became afflicted with tzaraat the cloud was lifted from above the tent in order to make it clear that the Jewish people were delaying their journey not because the cloud still rested, but in Miriam's honor.

We can ask the following question: for decades Hashem did not reward Miriam for having waited that one hour for Moshe when he was sent into the river, and she would certainly be duly rewarded in the Next World for this and for all the other countless good deeds she had performed during her lifetime. Why specifically now, just when she was being punished for having spoken loshon hara, is it suddenly "remembered" that she had never been properly compensated for having waited for Moshe?

"IN THE PLACE OF A PERSON'S JUDGMENT THERE THEY MENTION HIS RIGHTEOUS DEEDS"

We can explain as follows: R' Yisrael M'Salant zt"l once went to a particular Talmid Chacham in order to give him a sum of money that belonged to him. His disciples asked why the Rav had to trouble himself rather than sending the money via a messenger, R' Yisrael replied that he wished to rebuke the Talmid Chacham regarding a particular issue in which R' Yisrael sensed that he did not act appropriately. Therefore at the same time that he was coming to reprove him he was delivering the money himself as a means of honoring the Talmid Chacham for his Torah. They then asked: why must you honor someone specifically when you are about to rebuke him? He showed them the following discussion in the Gemara: "There was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year" (Shmuel II 21:1), David asked Hashem why they were being so afflicted. "Hashem said: 'the famine is for Shaul and for the House of Blood, for his having killed the Givonim'" (ibid.). The Gemara elaborates: "'for Shaul' - that Shaul was not properly eulogized, 'and for the House of Blood' - for his having killed the Givonim and the Jewish people did not protest" (Yevamot 78b). The Gemara then asks "G-d demanded retribution for the honor of Shaul because he was not properly eulogized and at the same time He demanded retribution for that which Shaul sinned in having killed the Givonim?" (ibid.). How can it be that on the one hand the A-lmighty is reprimanding the Jewish people for not having protested Shaul's improper behavior, while at the same time they are being reprimanded for not having properly eulogized him? The Gemara responds: "'Seek Hashem all you humble of the land, who have fulfilled (paalu) His law (mishpato)' (Tzefania 2:3) - in the place of a person's judgment (mishpato) there they mention his righteous deeds (paalo)" (Yevamot 78b). In other words "when a person is being judged, it is there that we make mention of his righteous acts" (Rashi Yevamot 78b). Therefore, precisely when Hashem decided to punish Shaul for the sin he committed, He was demanding from the Jewish people the honor due to Shaul - "Bechir Hashem" - "the chosen one of G-d" (Shmuel II 21:6) which they had not afforded him. Explained R' Yisrael M'Salant: There is Mitzvah to follow in the ways of Hashem, and I too, when needing to rebuke this Talmid Chacham, thought it appropriate to accord him honor for those things that he deserves to be honored for (see Or Yisrael page 116).

This appears to be the case with Miriam as well - it is when Hashem judges her for the loshon hara she spoke

about Moshe "there they mention her righteous deeds". This is the time to reward her for that one hour she waited for Moshe at the edge of the river.

A CARAVAN OF SPICES

There is another place in the Torah in which we find such a concept. Yoseph was taken down to Egypt by "a caravan of Yishmaelim was coming from Gilad, their camels bearing spices, balsam and lotus on their way to bring them down to Egypt" (Bereishit 37:25). Chazal point out: "why did the verse publicize what their burden contained? To make known the reward of the righteous - for it is not the way of Arabs to carry anything but petroleum and resin whose odor is foul, but for this one - Yoseph, it happened that spices were the cargo of the caravan so that he should not be harmed by the foul odor" (Rashi there). To prevent Yoseph being subject to a bad smell, would it not have sufficed to have the caravan carrying a load with no scent at all such as grain and barley? If the fragrances in this caravan were in order to reward him for his righteousness (as appears from the beginning of Rashi's words), what is so urgent that Hashem had to reward Yoseph precisely at this juncture when he is being brought down to Egypt?

It appears we can explain this as well using the principle of "in the place of a person's judgment there they mention his righteous deeds". At this point Hashem was judging Yoseph for what he did to his holy brothers - "Yoseph would bring evil reports of them to their father" (Bereishit 37:2). If so, this was also the time to give him a partial reward for his righteousness - in the guise of the aroma of spices. The fact that Hashem's Attribute of Justice required him to be cast into a pit and sold into slavery, eventually ending up in jail is one thing. Accompanying the judgment, however, must be mention of his good deeds. Therefore it would not have sufficed for the merchants to carry a load which was odorless, rather he was transported on a caravan carrying merchants with a load containing spices, balsam and lotus.

Why does the Torah specifically choose these two incidents those involving Miriam and Yoseph - to teach us this principle of "in the place of a person's judgment there they mention his righteous deeds"? If Hashem acts in this manner, then He certainly must have dealt with other tzaddikim in this way when they acted inappropriately? Why does the Torah not stress this issue when speaking of these other tzaddikim as well?

LOSHON HARA - A NARROW-MINDED VIEWPOINT

The answer to this question can be found by analyzing further the sins of Yoseph and Miriam. Each was guilty (according to their level) of speaking loshon hara. Yoseph spoke negatively of his brothers and Miriam of her brother Moshe. Hashem wishes to teach us the principle of "in the place of a person's judgment there they mention his righteous deeds" particularly in connection with the prohibition against speaking loshon hara, in order to teach us (at least one of the reasons) why it is forbidden to speak loshon hara. The whole idea of loshon hara being forbidden is a difficult one to comprehend. I can understand what is wrong with speaking falsehoods about another person, but what is wrong with "loshon hara" which is in fact all true?

The problem with loshon hara is that a human being cannot perceive comprehensively the entire personality of another. You might see a negative point in his behavior, did you find all of his positive traits too? Presumably not, for only Hashem can know the entire makeup of a person - both the positive as well as negative points - the "judgment" as well as "the deeds". Because we cannot perceive all that there is of another person, we may not pass judgment on him or speak of his negative points. This is what is alluded to in the incidents of Yoseph and Miriam Hashem is hinting to us - you may not speak loshon hara because you are not aware of the entire makeup of this person.

KEEPING OUR MOUTH PURE

We are in the midst of our preparation for Matan Torah. For seven days we kept our mouths pure of chametz. Chametz symbolizes a person's "gaava", his pride, as the Chinuch explains: that same flour which takes up so little space rises much higher upon becoming chametz. A person possessed with gaava makes himself into something much greater than he is. For this reason chametz may not be brought as an offering. In last week's parsha we read about the negative effects of drinking too much wine, how it takes away a person's ability to think straight. A Kohen may therefore not serve after having drunk wine and a Rav may not issue a halachic ruling. In Parshat Nitzavim Moshe Rabenu told the Jewish people of all the

good Hashem has done for us: "I led you for forty years in the Wilderness, your garment did not wear out from on you, and your shoe did not wear out from on your foot wine or intoxicant you did not drink" (Devarim 29:4-5). What is so praiseworthy about our not having had wine? "So that you would know that I am Hashem your G-d" (ibid.). We did not drink wine for forty years in order that we attain the wisdom to be able to know that Hashem took us out of Egypt.

In last week's Parsha we also read which animals, fowl, and fish we may and may not eat. What we eat can have a positive influence or G-d forbid, a negative one. In short, in Parshat Shmini we learned what may not enter our mouths. In Tazria-Metzora we learn what may not come out from our mouths. Eating improper foods can have a negative influence on our Torah observance, but speaking improperly can also negatively influence our ability to learn, its effect is probably more severe. Our holy mouths should not be used for anything that is not holy.

The Talmud Yerushalmi (see Brachot 1:2) quotes a statement by R' Shimon bar Yochai that had he lived during the period of Matan Torah, he would have asked Hashem to grant each person two mouths. What would man do with two mouths? One would be used for learning Torah, while the other for less spiritual and more worldly matters. Man, after all has to eat as well as at times discuss other matters. It would be more appropriate for one mouth to be designated exclusively for Torah study while the other would be used for other needs.

Why should one have separate mouths for holy and profane needs? Because if the mouth used for Torah were also used for other matters, it would not have the same sanctity as a mouth used exclusively for Torah study. Although Baruch Hashem, we are a holy nation, nevertheless the mouth that learns Torah is not on the level desired by R' Shimon bar Yochai.

Why did R' Shimon bar Yochai desire that the mouth we use for Torah to have a higher level of sanctity? Because the holier the mouth that spouts forth words of Torah, the more elevated that Torah is. We have only one mouth with which to do everything, but at least we should keep it as clean as possible from loшон hara, machloket and other bad words, we should keep it as holy as possible, this we can learn from Rav Shimon bar Yochai.

When Hashem was about to reveal Himself to the Jewish nation, He first told Moshe Rabenu "You shall be to Me a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation" (Shmot 19:5). We are a holy nation holy things should not be used for unholy purposes. This is akin to "meila" taking holy things and using them for personal needs. Our mouths are holy and they must be used for holy pursuits only. There are times when we must take care of physical needs, but as much as we can we must keep our mouths holy we are a holy nation.

REWARD FOR ERETZ YISRAEL

You all came to Eretz Yisrael, the land which even non-Jews refer to as the Holy Land. It must be used for Torah, Yirat Shamayim, and speedily in our day for bringing the offerings. You will all receive a tremendous amount of "schar halicha" for coming to Eretz Yisrael from America and other far off lands. I happened to see the following idea today: One who travels ten minutes to the Beit Midrash in order to learn a page of Gemara which perhaps will take him one hour, will be rewarded for the hour of learning as well as for the travel time. What would be if one were to elect to remain in the Beit Midrash for two hours learning two pages of Gemara? Clearly he will be doubly rewarded for the learning time, but perhaps he will also be doubly rewarded for his travel time. Given the distances you have traveled, you have the ability to receive so much reward, for every word of Torah you learn, for every proper Tefilla you pray, and for every act of chesed you perform.

Chazal tell us that one who travels from Chutz la'Aretz to Eretz Yisrael is equivalent to two people who live in Eretz Yisrael. Based on what we have just said, you have the ability to receive far more than double the reward of a resident of Eretz Yisrael. You have come to this Holy Land and it is important that you treat Eretz Yisrael with the Kedusha that it has. Most important of all is to honor the Kedusha of the Torah, not to profane it, for the Torah is the source of all holiness. There are many people who use the Torah for heresy, and thereby use it as a "hechsher" for Reform and other things. The Torah is holy because it is Hashem's "you shall become holy, for I am holy" (Vayikra 11:45). The Torah is the work of Hashem and therefore it is the Holy of Holies. In the merit of our respecting the Kedusha of the Torah, of Eretz Yisrael, and of our bodies, we will witness the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash and eat from the sacrificial offerings speedily in our day. Amen.

Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Shimon Peretz

Trading Places

There was once a great Rav who used to travel from town to town in order to answer all sorts of halachic questions posed by the common people. Whenever he would arrive at a town, his faithful wagon driver would accompany him to the local shul where the townsfolk would come with all their inquiries. One day, the wagon driver mustered up the courage to request if the venerable Rav would switch places with him, and that he, the wagon driver, would dress up



like the Rav, and the Rav would dress up like the wagon driver. After all, having been at the Rav's side for many years, he was familiar with all the questions. Furthermore, the Rav was in great need of a break. All the Rav needed to do was to sit in the shul with the wagon driver to make sure he answered the questions correctly.



And so it was, at the next town, the Rav and the wagon driver dressed up as each other, and the wagon driver began answering the townsfolk's questions, all of which he had heard asked to the Rav over the years, and he was therefore familiar with all the answers. Everything went smoothly until one person asked something which the Rav had never dealt with, and, being a simple wagon driver, he was not equipped to answer the question. Not wishing to reveal what had taken place, and not wanting to give the wrong answer, the wagon driver thought for several seconds and said, "why, this question is so easy, even my wagon driver can answer it!"

While doubtful if such a story ever took place, we can derive a lesson on the importance of roles and boundaries.

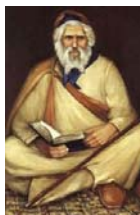
In our parsha the Torah describes the different types of *tzara'at*, that can afflict a person, ending with *tzara'at* which afflicts a house. In describing the sequence of events, the Torah states that the owner of the house sees a *nega*, or "a touch" of the *tzara'at*. This finding is reported to the Kohen because he is the one who must proclaim whether the alleged affliction is indeed *tzara'at* which would render the house *tamei*, or is it a discoloration unrelated to the spiritual affliction.

The Torah states, "the home owner approaches the kohen and says 'I saw **something like** an affliction (*kenega*) in the house'" (Vayikra 35:14).. The homeowner declares that he observed something "like" an affliction, but does not state unequivocally that the house is afflicted. Rashi points out that this would apply even when the home owner is a sage and knows for sure that it is *tzara'at*.

Many explanations have been offered for the homeowner's deliberately ambiguous statement. Among them is that even if the homeowner is certain that it is a *tzara'at* affliction, the kohen must be the one to make the declaration, for ultimately it is his responsibility to declare the house as *tamei*. The fact that the homeowner is not the one ultimately responsible for declaring the house *tamei* means that not only may he not make the declaration but he should not even definitively state that he spotted *tzara'at*, for that would be infringing in the kohen's turf.

This happens often in our daily lives. We comment on how others do their jobs, judging whether a certain task was performed well, or how we would have done it differently. We must remember the lesson of the wagon driver and the *tzara'at* - it is not our place to judge another's performance of his particular role, and we must always respect our own boundaries as well as those of others, as the Torah here teaches us.

Petuchei Chotam on Parshat Metzora



Rav Chanan Bina will be teaching a passage from the sefer Petuchei Chotam each week on the parshat hashavua. The sefer was written by HaRav Yaakov Abuchatzzeira zt"l. Click [here](#) to listen.

Talk about talking (in shul)

Given that the subject of talking in Shul is a subject which is very close to the heart of our Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"n, we have decided to bring you excerpts of our rendered translation to the Sefer "*Morah Mikdash*". The Sefer is a collection of citations on the subject from many sefarim including the Zohar and Shulchan Aruch first printed in the year 5542 (229 years ago) and reprinted in 5743 (28 years ago).





#17

The following appears in the Sefer Chareidim (perek 1, positive Torah commandments dependent on the heart which apply daily):

A person sitting in shul should be filled with fear, trepidation, and not take lightly the fact that he is in the presence of *Hashem Yisborach* who is dwelling among them. The Torah writes: "*umikdashi tirau*" "My Sanctuary shall you revere" (Vayikra 26:2), the midrash in Torat Kohanim comments on the *pasuk et mikdesheichem* "your sanctuary" (Vayikra 26:31) that the word sanctuary includes *batei kneset* and *batei midrash* throughout the world and throughout the generations. Regarding them it is written "I have been for them a small sanctuary" (Yechezkel 11:16).

Levity and idle conversation are therefore inappropriate and the punishment for violating this prohibition is very severe. The Zohar comments on the words in Parshas Naso "*ki yafil*" regarding the vow to become a nazir (Bamidbar 6:2) that every synagogue in the world is considered a sanctuary.

Two "contemporary" *mekubalimour*, HaRav Moshe Kordivero zt"l and Chacham HaRav Yitzchak Ashkenazi zt"l ruled that all talk in shul is forbidden with the exception of divrei Torah and Yisras Hashem. The punishment for one who talks in shul even if not during times of *tefilla* is great, for the Zohar writes that when one is in shul, he should fear of the One Who dwells in it. Divine revelation is in fact described as *kol demama daka* "a still, thin sound" (Melachim I 19:12).

The Sma"k and Kol Bo write that we should derive a *kal vachomer* from the non-Jews who in silence in their houses of worship, how much more so must we do so in the presence of the King of kings HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Dedications, Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Dedications

This week's dedications:

- Parnas Hayom in Rosh Chodesh Nissan was sponsored by an Anonymous Alumnus (5761-62,64) in the zechut of Moshe Shlomo ben Devorah & Family.



Visitors

The following people learned/visited in the Yeshiva:

- Michael Pilevsky (5757-58)

Mazal tov's

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh would like to wish a mazal tov to:

- [Jeremy](#) (5763-64) and Dahlia Simons on the birth of a baby boy, Eitan Reuven.

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Michoel Pinchas ben Frachah | • Matityahu Yaakov ben Gittel Rivka |
| • Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah | • Ada Bat Miriam |
| • Rachel bat Chana | • Reuven ben Tova Chaya |
| • Yehuda Pinchas ben Asna | • Aharon ben Simah |
| • Sagit bat Esther | • Shayna bat Chava |
| • Fruma bat Ita | • Zev eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel |
| • Chaya bat Grunia | • Avram Gershon ben Tzippa |
| • Tamara Nechama bat Karmela | • Freydil Tzivya Bas Rochel |
| • Ester bat Chaya | • Ari ben Rivka |
| • Binyamin Yonatan ben Leikah | • Yosef ben Golda |

- Chaya Chana bat Alta Rivkah
- Yosef ben Hilda
- Maron ben Hadas Esther
- Chaya Meira Mindel bat Chava Golda
- Chinoam Rina bat Avital Hoday-ya
- Ditza bat Vardit Tali bat Devorah Bina
- Akiva ben Gittel
- Marcel Ben Prinah
- Evelyn Bat Dina
- Mordechai Eliezer Hacoheh ben Esther Miriam
- Avraham Elizar ben Chana Pesha
- Esther bat Brana
- Miriam bat Shulamit
- Rivka Chava bat Rachel
- Margalit Chaya bat Rachel
- David ben Leah
- Elizabeth bat Annette
- Edmund Ben Nazira
- Shmuel Chai Ben Hadassa
- Alyza Sarah Bat Yehudit
- Inbal bat Nelya



And of course we are always davening for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)

[Submit Names](#) to the list.

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?**- [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Bina,
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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