

Tzara'as and Priestly Sanctity

By Freddie Grunsfeld, 11th Grade

In last week's Perasha, Perashath Isha Ki Tazria', the reader is exposed to a mysterious set of physical abnormalities referred to as Sara'ath. This group of deformities includes: a skin disease and some sort of mold or mildew on both clothing and on structures. This grouping of Tumah can find its inverse set, one of Qedhusha, elsewhere in the Miqra, namely in the Shiba'ath Yemeh HaMilueem legislation and later laws addressed to the priests. While the Sara'ath legislation addresses the impurity of these three categories, the Yemeh HaMilueem legislation addresses the Qedhusha of: the body of the Kohen, the Clothes of the Kohen, and the home of the Kohen, which is the Tabernacle. This parallelism extends further than ideas in abstract, in fact the very laws of the Mesora' are also the inverse of those of the priest. Multiple examples in which the laws of Sara'ath parallel those of the Priest can be seen in the following chart.

Priestly Legislation	Sara'ath Legislation
"Slaughter the ram, and take <u>some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the ridges of his sons' right ears, and on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet</u> ; and dash the rest of the blood against every side of the altar round about."	" <u>The priest shall take some of the blood of the guilt offering, and the priest shall put it on the ridge of the right ear of the one who is being purified, and on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the right foot.</u> "
And Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, " <u>Do not bare your heads and do not rend your clothes</u> , lest you die and anger strike the whole community. But your kin.	As for the person with a leprous affection: <u>the clothes shall be rent, the head shall be left bare</u> , and the upper lip shall be covered over; and that person shall call out " <u>Impure! Impure!</u> " <i>(Continued on page 4)</i>

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Loshon Horror

By Zachary Rosenberg, 12th Grade

The word "Metzora" comes from Lashon Hara: "Motzei Ra" (English - propagates slander). The root of Lashon Hara is a desire to push another person down and bring yourself up. This makes a split between you and the other person and holds back the coming of Mashiach.

The Gemara says that as a Tikkun for Lashan Hara (to fix the committing of Lashon Hara), a Talmid Chacham should be involved in Torah and an Am Ha'aretz should humble himself. However, why did the Gemara not mention Teshuva?

The Chovas Halvovos says that in heaven a person will be shown many Mitzvos and Aveiros that he never did. As brought down in Midrashim, this is because when someone speaks Lashon Hara about another, his victim gets his mitzvos and he receives the victim's aveiros.

This explains why chronic speakers of Lashon Hara have no share in Olam Haba - they may have done good things, but they lost all of their merit by speaking Lashon Hara.

The Gemara in Bava Metzia says that there are three people who down to Gehenim and don't come up.

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Metzorah Questions

1. What two people in the Torah are afflicted with *tzara'at* (skin disease)?
2. Which three objects involved in the purification of *tzara'at* are also used in the purification process of someone ritually impure through contact with the dead (*tameh meis*) as described in [Numbers 19:6](#)?
3. In this parsha, what inorganic object is described as being alive? What else is described as being alive?
4. What action, usually forbidden, is part of the purification process of *tzara'at*?
5. What body part appears in this parsha, and nowhere else in the Torah?
6. What country is mentioned in this parsha?
7. a) What three letters comprise a verb and a color that are both mentioned in this parsha? b) What other two places in the Torah is that verb mentioned?

Answers

1. In parshas Shemos, at the Burning Bush, Moshe's hand is temporarily afflicted with *tzara'at* ([Exodus 4:6](#)). In parshas Beha'alsecha, Miriam is afflicted with *tzara'at* for speaking improperly (*lashon hara*) against her brother Moshe ([Numbers 12:10](#)).
2. The purification of *tzara'at* involves the use of (1) cedar wood, (2) crimson colored wool, and (3) hyssop ([Leviticus 14:4](#)). In parshas Chukas, the purification process of someone ritually impure through contact with the dead, requires these ingredients, in addition to the ashes of the red heifer ([Numbers 19:6](#)).
3. a) The water used for the purification of the leper must be *mayim chaim* - "living waters" from a natural spring ([Leviticus 14:5](#)). b) as an offering, the leper must take what is described as "living birds" (14:4).
4. Normally, a person is forbidden to shave the hair off his entire body, which could involve the prohibition of cutting off the corners of the head and the corners of the beard ([Leviticus 19:27](#)). [It may also involve the prohibition for a man to adopt the practices of a woman, such as shaving parts of the body ([Deut. 22:5](#) with Rashi).] Despite this, the purification of *tzara'at* involves shaving off all the hair on his body ([Leviticus 14:8-9](#)).
5. As part of *tzara'at* purification, one must shave off all his hair including his eyebrows ([Leviticus 14:9](#)). Eyebrows are not mentioned anywhere else in the Torah.
6. The land of Canaan appears in this parsha. Leprosy can only appear on the houses in the land of Canaan ([Leviticus 14:34](#)).
7. a) The Torah discusses the consequences if a person with the ritual impurity of a *zav* were to spit on someone ([Leviticus 15:8](#)). The word for spit is "*yarok*," also the word for the color green. This color appears as a color of *tzara'at* that may appear on the walls of a house ([Leviticus 14:37](#)). b) Two other places in the Torah mentions spitting: In parshas Beha'alsecha, Miriam is punished with *tzara'at* for seven days - because if a father were to spit in front of his daughter she would be ashamed for seven days; so too Miriam should be isolated for seven days ([Numbers 12:14](#)). In parshas Ki Teitzei, the procedure of *chalitza* requires the widowed sister-in-law to spit in front of the brother of her deceased husband ([Deut. 25:9](#)).

ALIYAH SUMMARY

First Aliyah: The Torah reading begins with a description of the purification procedure for a person who contracted *tzara'at*. After the priest determines that the *tzara'at* has been healed, a ceremony involving two birds, a cedar plank, a scarlet thread and water from a live stream, is used for the initial stage of the purification. The individual also shaves his entire body. After a seven day wait, the person shaves again, and brings three animals and an oil offering to the Temple.

Second Aliyah: The priest processes the offerings in the manner prescribed in this section. With this the purification process is completed.

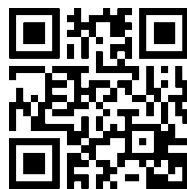
Third Aliyah: If the individual suffering from *tzara'at* cannot afford the above sacrifices, two birds can be substituted for two of the animals. This section describes the slightly different purification process reserved for the impoverished person.

Fourth Aliyah: Homes, too, can be afflicted with *tzara'at*. If stones on a home become discolored — acquiring a strong red or green pigment — a priest is summoned. If indeed the discoloration seems to be *tzara'at*, the priest quarantines the home for up to three weeks. Depending on the spread of the discoloration, the home is either declared to be pure, or the specific stones are removed from the house, or, in the most extreme situations, the house is demolished. The Torah then describes the purification process for such a home — which is very similar to the initial stage of the purification of the human afflicted with *tzara'at* (described in the First Aliyah).

Fifth Aliyah: After concluding the subject of *tzara'at*, the Torah discusses the ritual impurity of a man who issues a sickly and unnatural seminal discharge, as well as the method by which this person attains purity when the condition passes.

Sixth Aliyah: This section discusses the ritual impurity contracted by a man who issues a (normal) seminal discharge, the ritual impurity of a menstruating woman, and of a man who cohabits with her. All such people must immerse in a mikvah (ritual pool) in order to be purified.

Seventh Aliyah: Under certain circumstances a menstruating woman was required to bring to the Temple two bird offerings in order to attain purity. These sacrifices are described in this section.



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Shmuel Maltz

Eating Matzah 30 Days Before Pesach

Where does the minhag not to eat Matzah 30 days before Pesach come from, and does the minhag extend to matzo balls?

The real halacha is on Erev Pesach, according to a Gemara in Yerushalmi, since one should not act too quickly. Tosfos says Matzah Ashirah is mutar on Erev Pesach. The Magen Avraham says that it already starts the night before Erev Pesach. The Mishnah Berurah says that minhag is not to eat Matzah from Rosh Chodesh Nissan. This is due to the fact that Pesach is already on our radar at this time. There are Poskim who don't agree with this minhag, however, and especially the minhag not to eat from 30 days before Pesach. The Shulchan Aruch HaRav mentions this minhag, thus many are careful not to eat Matzah 30 days before Pesach. Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that this minhag of 30 days is included in learning the Halachos of Pesach 30 days prior to Pesach.

The Levush says that the reason why one may not eat Matzah on Erev Pesach is because when one does so, it is as if they are being a ba'al taava. Perhaps this idea wouldn't apply 30 days or even a week before Pesach because one is certainly not considered to be a ba'al taavah if they eat a meal that far off from the Chag. According to the Rambam, one shouldn't eat Matzah on Erev Pesach so that it should be a Hekker (sign) that one should only eat Matzos for the purpose of a Mitzvah.

What about matzo balls?

It seems that they should be permitted even on Erev Pesach due to the fact that they are cooked, one cannot be yotzei their Mitzvah with them. This would be considered an extreme application of the minhag. Some permit even eating egg matzah before Pesach for the same reason. The Shulchan Aruch Harav writes, however, if the egg matzah tastes just like regular Matzah, then one shouldn't eat it because one of the points of not eating Matzah on Erev Pesach is to have that excitement when one eats Matzah for the first time at the Seder.

In the Teshuvos Mishneh Halachos it writes that Matzah that is Chametz can be eaten before Pesach because it cannot be eaten on Pesach. However, not all Poskim agree with that. The Piskei Teshuvah writes that just because it doesn't have a Kosher L'Pesach certification, it doesn't mean it is not Kosher L'Pesach. We wouldn't rely on that Matzah on Pesach, but we don't for sure know that it is chametz. He writes furthermore that one can be lenient if you are careful to only eat handmade Matzah on Pesach, then one can potentially eat machine-made chametz Matzah on Pesach because it is not something that you would eat on Pesach anyways, and it doesn't have the same taste as the handmade Matzah.

Can one who has the Minhag not to eat from 30 days or from Rosh Chodesh Nissan and on use Matzah as Lechem Mishneh during that span? To put it simply, yes, but the question is, does one need to perform Hataras Nedarim? After all, they took on such a minhag, and now they are breaking it. The answer is no because the minhag was not accepted regarding this case. The minhag is not to eat the Matzah when you don't really need it. But, when one is in a situation where they actually do need the Matzah for halachic reasons, then one should for sure use it.

SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



With Ari Ivry

The Power Of Speech

Did you know that it is possible for a person to be murdered and not even know about it, even carrying on life as usual? How can this be?

This week's parsha speaks of the affliction known as tzara'at. The meforshim explain that tzara'at was a punishment for speaking lashon hara. Lashon hara, which literally means "the evil tongue" or "evil speech," includes slander, gossip and rumors, among other things.

As the old British wartime saying goes, "Careless talk costs lives." The Gemara relates in the name of Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani: "Why is lashon hara called a thrice-slaying tongue? Because it kills three people: the person speaking, the person spoken to, and the person being spoken about." It may not kill them physically, but it is a character assassination.

The Rambam adds a further dimension: sometimes a person may say something that is not quite slander or gossip. Yet, as his statement passes from person to person, it eventually does cause harm, trouble, fright or hurt to the party being spoken about. For example, even praising a person, if done in front of that person's enemy who is liable to react negatively, could come under the category of slander or gossip.

The Orchot Tzadikim comments: "Before you speak, you are the master of your words. After you speak, your words master you." How often we feel imprisoned by our own words after we have said something that we wish we hadn't or know we shouldn't have.

The Midrash relates that Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel asked his servant, Tavi, to buy him something good from the market. The servant returned with some tongue. Rabbi Shimon then asked his servant to buy something bad from the market. The servant returned with more tongue. "How can this be? I asked you to buy something good, you bought tongue; I asked you to buy something bad, you also bought tongue?" Replied Tavi, "It has good and bad. When it is good, it has a lot of goodness. When it is bad, it is very bad."

We speak thousands of words every day. Words have enormous power. May we merit to use them only for good purposes.



(Continued from page 1)
What was included in the chart is only a portion of the parallels between the Priestly legislation and the Sara'ath legislation, too include to include all of the connections would be superfluous. The careful reader should be able to pick up on all of the connections without being explicitly stated here.

Place all these on the palms of Aaron and his sons, <u>and offer them as an elevation offering before God.</u>	The priest shall take one of the male lambs and offer it with the log of oil as a guilt offering, <u>and he shall elevate them as an elevation offering before God.</u>
who enters the <u>Tent of Meeting</u> to officiate within the sanctuary, shall wear them seven days .	After that, the camp may be entered but one must remain outside one's <u>tent seven days</u>
On the <u>eighth day</u> Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel. He said to Aaron: " Take a calf of the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and bring them before God.	On the <u>eighth day</u> that person shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish , three-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in for a meal offering, <u>and one log of oil.</u> <i>(Continued on page 5)</i>



Good Day

By Tani Leitner, 12th Grade

In the film, A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood Tom Hanks Plays Fred Rogers, a man who was Mr. Rogers in Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. The film follows a journalist and Hanks and their relationship develops over the course of the movie. The journalist has a very negative attitude towards Mr. Rogers at the beginning of the movie and this is further enhanced when Mr. Rogers turns all of the journalist's questions on himself. He asks him deep personal questions and tries to fix this "broken" journalist with his pure good heart and his power to ask the right questions and to listen. This is the essence of what Parshat Metzora is about. Good hearts fix others who may have done wrong or may be "broken" just through the power of listening, talking, and helping. From the beginning of our time, Judaism has been a religion of communication, talking, and listening. The world was created by "And He said... And there was". One of our biggest principles of faith is based on listening- "Hear'o Israel" or "Shema Yisroel". We see from Tom Hanks' character that listening and talking to people with the intention of helping them is necessary for being a good and kind person. We want g-d to listen to us but if we can't listen to others why should he? This is even now more important today with social media and the internet, leading to big problems in hate speech and its effect on people. Online abuse plagues our generation because of how easy it is to talk to someone from behind a screen, and sometimes even anonymously. This is why now more than ever we should learn from this weeks parsha of how important it is to listen to people and talk with them with the pure intention of helping them.

Accredit to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

(Grunsfeld-Continued from page 4)

Now that it has been established that there is both an abstract and literary connection between Sara'ath and the Priest it is incumbent upon the reader to ponder why such a connection exists. Before uncovering the meaning behind this connection, it is first necessary to articulate a central detail in Sara'ath passages: besides for the individual that is either plagued with the disease or owns the object which is suspect to Sara'ath, the only other figure who plays a major role in the processing of the Sara'ath is the Priest. In fact the priest has total control over deciding whether or not something is considered Sara'ath, so much so that until the priest declares a house as containing the disease the house can not spread Tumah or ritual impurity. This detail begs the obvious question: why is it that the Torah commands the nation to seek help from the priest, a spiritual leader, when they experience a medical or physical problem? Why is Sara'ath so dependent upon the priest? Why does the Torah not command the individual to seek help and advice from a doctor or someone who specializes in molds and mildew? Perhaps the answer to these questions and the answer to the prior question regarding the connection between the Sara'ath and the priest can be found in the nature of the law of Sara'ath. Perhaps by allotting these responsibilities to the priest, to look deeply into the plague, and to have the Mesora' go through the very same processes that the priest himself went through, this will cause the priest to see himself in the person that is inflicted with Sara'ath. By having the priest involved with the leper who may have committed a transgression that resulted in such punishments, go through the very same processes that he went through, the priest may realize his own transgressions and rectify them. Furthermore, there may also be a subconscious goal that the Torah is trying to achieve. In the passages regarding Sara'ath the priest is commanded to look ("Ve-ra'ah") 40 times. The subconscious effect of training the priest to be one who looks, is a culture of priests who are observant of their surroundings and of themselves. When a priest does something wrong, the priest's training will cause a quick reaction and will once again call upon the priest to take action.



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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: ARIEL KORORI

Two simple tailors worked as partners in Vilna. They weren't making much money in the large city, where there were already many established and well-known tailors around.

They decided to circulate among the small cities of the region to find their luck. With G-d's help, they were successful, serving simple villagers and peasants.

In one town they passed through, they saw that the Jewish village manager was distraught. He explained that the nobleman, who was the local landowner, would soon be holding a wedding, and had asked the manager to bring the best Jewish tailors to his service. However, the nobleman had not been satisfied with any of the work and was now threatening to fire the manager, and perhaps also expel the Jewish tenants from his properties.

Upon hearing this, the tailors said, "Why don't you present us to the nobleman?"

"Well," the manager warily replied, "you aren't acquainted with high fashion clothing."

"True," they replied, "but the nobleman has been dismissing the high fashion, so maybe he'll appreciate our simpler style." The manager agreed to give it a shot.

The nobleman asked for a sample dress, and after seeing what they had created, he was thrilled. He contracted them to tailor the wedding clothing for his entire extended family and all of his servants.

After the job was done, they walked away with a hefty sum of money. They also felt good that they had saved the livelihood of the village manager and the Jewish people of the vicinity.

When the tailors were about to leave town, the nobleman's wife spoke to her husband. "Look," she said. "We see how these Jews care so much about their co-religionists. Perhaps we should tell them about our Jewish prisoner who couldn't pay the rent for his inn and is still languishing in prison. Maybe these tailors would care enough to pay off his debt and free him."

She approached the Jewish tailors. When they asked how much the man owed, they were told that he owed 300 rubles. One tailor said that this was too steep a price to pay. The other, however, said, "How can I just walk away from another Jew's plight?"

He told his partner: "Let us split up our partnership, and see how much each of us truly owns." It turned out that each was left with precisely the amount needed—300 rubles. The generous tailor immediately gave the money to the nobleman's wife, and said, "Let the prisoner go free."

Both tailors returned to Vilna. The one who kept his money was able to establish a professional business in the big city. The other was empty-handed, with no partner, and no cash with which to restart his business. He fell into a deep depression, and the only thing he could manage was to collect donations. He became a beggar, and it seemed to the local population that he had lost his mind.

Very desperate one day, he directly approached a wealthy man, asking him to spare a few coins. The wealthy man asked what he would receive in return, and the beggar answered, "I will pray for you."

The wealthy man chuckled, and said: "What will your prayer do for me? But here's a few coins either way." The wealthy man went on with his business meetings that day and was very successful. He thought that perhaps it had something to do with the beggar's blessing.

So the next time he was to have a business meeting, he made a point to pass by the beggar again. After giving him a few coins, he asked for a blessing. Again, he was fabulously successful with his business affairs.

This went on for quite a few months, until one day, while gathered with family, they asked what was the secret to his newfound, absolute success. He told them about the blessings he made sure to receive, and how they were always fulfilled.

Before long, the erstwhile tailor had a large following of people who would seek his blessings, which consistently came true.

A group of the Baal Shem Tov's disciples were passing through town and heard the peculiar story of the beggar whose blessings were always fulfilled. They told their master about it, and he said that this must be a very special man, with an especially lofty soul. "Bring him to me," he said. "I'd like to speak with him."

The Baal Shem Tov questioned him, asking what special deeds he had done. The beggar said that he really did not know of any exceptional heroics he could claim. "I'm just a simple man," he said, "No one unique or important."

The Baal Shem Tov had the man tell his entire life story. When he reached the part where he parted with 300 rubles

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to save a man from prison, the Baal Shem Tov exclaimed, “Aha! This is it! This eminent and selfless action of yours is what causes your blessings to come true.”

Hearing this from the Baal Shem Tov, and realizing the uniqueness of his act, left a great impression on the man, and he was able to crawl out of his depression.

The Baal Shem Tov spent time with the sincere tailor and taught him Torah. Eventually, he became an accomplished scholar and a great tzaddik.

Have we had opportunities to effect profound positive change in another's life? When have we done so? Can we help ourselves and others appreciate the good we have caused—as the Baal Shem Tov did?

(Adapted from The Storyteller, vol. 5, pg. 145)
Written by Hillel Baron, Chabad.org

(Rosenberg-Continued from page 1)

One of them is someone who lives with a married woman. Tosfos asks a question on this based on the next Gemara, which quotes Dovid Hamelech: he said that when asked what death penalty he would receive for living with a married woman, he replied that someone who lives with a married woman is punished with Chenek, strangulation, but they still have a share in Olam Haba. However, one who embarrasses his friend in public doesn't have a share in Olam Haba. We see from this Gemara about Dovid that someone who lives with a married woman DOES get Olam Haba, so why does the first Gemara say that they don't?

We can answer that Dovid was saying that it's true that he shouldn't be getting Olam Haba (like the first Gemara says), but since the people who asked Dovid this question embarrassed him, he received their Olam Haba and they got his punishment of not getting Olam Haba.

Chazal tell us that Hashem, the Jewish people, and the Torah are all one. By being involved in Torah, you are connected to Hashem, and this is the biggest Tikkun, even more than bringing Korbanos. Similarly, when one humbles himself, that is a tremendous Tikkun.

This explains why the first Gemara that we mentioned tells us the Tikkun for Lashon Hara without mentioning Teshuva. Teshuva is indeed necessary for Lashon Hara, as with any Aveirah. However, for all the Aveiros that a person gets from other people as a result of speaking Lashon Hara, one can't do Teshuva. So, the only Tikkun is to be connected to Hashem by being involved with learning Torah, or, if you can't, by humbling yourself.

Adapted from HaRav Yosef Stern

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Eitan Schafler

10th grade

Parahas Metzora

This week's parsha discusses its namesake, a metzora (someone who speaks lashon hara and consequently develops tzara'as [commonly mistranslated as leprosy]), how one gets this kind of tumah and how to eliminate it. The purifying process includes, but is not limited to, sprinkling a mixture of parah adumah ashes and water over the metzora which for some reason, makes the "sprinklee" pure and the sprinkler impure. This instance, at first glance, seems paradoxical: how could a purifying substance be metaher one and be metamei another? This question is even pondered by Shlomo, whose wisdom we know to have been sui generis, as it says in Bamidbar Rabbah (19;3): "Shlomo said, about all these things I have knowledge, but the instance of parah adumah, I investigated it, inquired into it, and examined it, I thought I could fathom it, but it eludes me." Yet after further thought, it is not so unfathomable that a substance can be beneficial for one who needs and deleterious to one who does not- after all, is it not comparable to medicine which can heal when needed, but can indeed be dangerous if used when unnecessary?

The other parts of the taharah process of the metzora are to take a bundle of cedar and hyssop, dip in a mixture of one slaughtered (melika) bird and spring water, and sprinkle this mixture on the metzora. The Bamidbar Rabbah (shum) asks why the cure to this illness is made of the tallest tree (cedar) and the shortest tree, and it answers: "It is because he made himself tall like the cedar that he was stricken with tzara'as, but when he lowers himself like (the level of) the hyssop, he will be healed on account of the hyssop."

We know that the greatest navi in the histo-

ry of the Jewish people was Moshe Rabbeinu. He is described (Vezos haberachah last perek) to have had a relationship "Panim el panim" - "face to face" with god. Hashem himself taught Moshe the entire Torah before giving it to his people, so it's understandable to say that he understood everything in the Torah, including the law of the metzora. The question now is what did Moshe have that Shlomo did not, that allowed him to comprehend this seeming paradox?

The answer is humility. Shlomo is often illustrated in Tanach as haughty. He even violated certain commandments such as the prohibition mentioned in parshat shoftim for a king to have too many wives, because he thought he was above haughtiness (which ended up making him arrogant, contrary to his previous belief). It is understandable that King Shlomo would not understand this purification process because it is rooted in humility, a characteristic that was foreign to him. Moshe, on the other hand, was able to understand this mitzvah whose rationale is to induce a sense of lowliness and humility because he was a person who understood the importance of that trait.

It is especially important to consider the importance of humility during Pesach, when we are told to act like free men and kings. We must realize that the only reason we are free men and are called "bnei hamelech"- "sons of the king" is because of Hashem's kindness and the fulfillment of his promise to the avos to redeem us and give us his torah. Through this we can maintain a healthy balance of royalty and hakaras hatov.

Good Shabbos and happy Pesach!

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