



The Impure Need Your Help

By Jonathan Kazlow, 12th Grade

In this week's Parsha, the following commandment is given: "When a person has the physical symptoms of the spiritual disease Tzara'at ... he must call out: '[I am] Impure! [I am] Impure!'" (VaYikra 13:45)."

The Gemara asks two questions: first, why is the Metzora required to call out at all? Furthermore, why use the double expression: '[I am] Impure! [I am] Impure!'"?

The Gemara answers that one mention of 'Impure' is to notify people to stay away so they do not become contaminated. The other mention of 'Impure' is to inform the public to pray to God for his recovery. But, a new question arises: why does the Metzora need others to pray on his behalf?

The reason cited for contracting the Tzara'at disease is the habitual speaking of Lashon Hara. Lashon Hara colloquially refers to statements that are either derogatory or potentially harmful to a third party. The Zohar explains that God will not listen to the prayers of habitual speakers of Lashon Hara. Therefore, the Metzora needs others to pray for him in order for the prayers to be listened to by God. The punishment for deliberately looking for the faults, rather than the merits, of others and talking about them to one's friends is that no matter how strongly these people pray and cry and no matter how many other good qualities they have, they will not be listened to by God.

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Internalizing the Concept of Hashgacha Pratis

By Avi Cohen, 11th Grade

The Ramban writes the tzaraas is a completely supernatural phenomenon. It occurs only in the chosen land of Eretz Yisrael, and afflicts only the Jewish people, and only when they maintain an elevated level of spirituality. When an avaeira is committed in such a spiritually changed environment, Hashem causes tzaraas to appear on the sinners house, clothing, or body to indicate that He has distanced Himself from the offender as a result of the transgression.

In such an era, the Jews lived with an incredible level of Hashgachah Pratis. A person who spoke lashon hara would immediately be punished with tzaraas. It was as if Hashem were literally speaking to him, as two friends would speak to each other. Even so, the Ramban writes that people were afflicted with tzaraas only after the Jews conquered and divided Israel, because only after they settled would they have the peace of mind to fully recognize Hashem and His Hashgacha Pratis.

The essence of Torah is to help us reach such a level of Hashgacha Pratis. The Ramban writes that the purpose of mitzvot is to divert our thoughts from the mundane and enables us to live with Hashem, so to speak, and be enveloped in Hashgacha Pratis. The birth of the Jewish nation occurred through Hashem demonstrating that con-

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th
Grade Rebbe

Parshas Tazria Questions

1. In which law is a female double that of a male?
2. Which 5 colors are mentioned in this parsha?
3. This parsha discusses the law of circumcision. a) Who is the first person in the Torah to receive a circumcision from his parent? b) Who is the first baby to have a circumcision when he was eight days old? c) Which other baby is circumcised elsewhere in the Torah?

Answers

1. The ritual impurity of childbirth lasts seven days for a male child and 14 days for a female child (Leviticus 12:2,5). In addition, the subsequent days of purity are 33 days for a baby boy and 66 days for a baby girl (Leviticus 12:4,5).
2. The following colors appear, all relating to the laws of leprosy: white (Leviticus 13:3), red (13:24), yellowish gold (13:36), black (Leviticus 13:37), and greenish yellow (13:49).
3. a) In parshas Lech Lecha, Avraham circumcises his son, 13-year-old Yishmael (Genesis 17:23,25). b) In parshas Vayera, Yitzhak was the first baby to receive a circumcision at eight days old (Genesis 21:4). c) In parshas Shemos, Moshe's second son is circumcised by his mother, Tzipora (Exodus 4:25).

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By: Avi Kwestel

1st Aliyah - In this Aliyah we hear about what happens from a Tumah and Taharah perspective when a woman gives birth and about the Korbanos that she brings after she gives birth and then in our Aliyah we begin hearing about the Halachos of Tzara'as (a spiritual skin disease which looks somewhat like leprosy but is not leprosy itself.)

2nd Aliyah - In this Aliyah the Torah continues to teach us about Tzara'as. In the last Aliyah the Torah tells us that if a person has a white spot on their skin but it did not penetrate the skin then the Kohen must quarantine the person for seven days. In this Aliyah we hear what the Kohen must look for at the end of those seven days regarding the color of the blemish, the size of the blemish. In this Aliyah we also hear that if a person's entire body is full of Tzara'as he is actually Tuhor and if a little healthy skin appears he is Tumai.

3rd Aliyah - In this Aliyah we continue hearing about the Halachos of Tzara'as - specifically what happens when Tzara'as appears on top of a blister or on an infection. Again, as in all of the Halachos of Tzara'as, the Kohen must look at it to see if it is the size and the color of Tzara'as or if it is scar tissue from a blister.

4th Aliyah - In this Aliyah we continue hearing about the Halachos of Tzara'as - specifically what happens when Tzara'as appears on the top of a burn. Again, as in all of the Halachos of Tzara'as, a Kohen must look at it to see if it is the right size, the right color of Tzara'as, or if it is scar tissue from the burn.

5th Aliyah - This Aliyah tells us that Tzara'as can also affect the areas on the body covered by hair. The symptoms and Halachos of this type of Tzara'as are quite different than standard Tzara'as. This Aliyah concludes with the Halachos of a person afflicted by multiple dull white areas on his skin.

6th Aliyah - This Aliyah discusses Tzara'as that is found on a bald spot. This Aliyah also discusses the procedures for one who is afflicted with Tzara'as. The main requirement for a person like this is that he must leave the city until his condition goes away. The Aliyah then discusses Tzara'as of clothing. This clothing is then shown to a Kohen who quarantines it for up to two weeks or burns it.

7th Aliyah - At the end of the quarantine period, depending of the circumstances, the clothing is either declared pure, burned completely, or only the part which was discolored is torn out and burnt.

Transcribed from YU Torah and adapted from Chabad.org

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Eli Wiseman

Common Seder Misconceptions

Apples are not required for *charoses*.

Even though a *tapuach* should be used for *charoses*, people think that *tapuach* means apple. However, *tapuach* in the Tanakh and Mishnah does not mean apples because apples did not grow in Eretz Yisroel in the times of the Mishnah nor in the times of Tanakh. Rather, *tapuach* most probably means a citrus fruit, such as a lemon or an orange. So really, a person should ideally put a citrus fruit into the *charoses*.

The obligation to eat a *kezayis* of *matzah b'cdai achilas pras* (the time it takes to eat 3 or 4 *beitzim*) might not require stuffing a huge piece of *matzah* in one's mouth within 2 minutes.

There is a discussion of how much a *kezayis* is. Some say it is 1/2 of a *beitza* and others say it is 1/3 of a *beitza*. Everyone agrees that a person should eat a *kezayis b'cdai achilas pras*, however, there is a discussion as to how much time that is.

The Minchas Chinuch writes that the time it takes to eat a *pras* (3 or 4 *beitzim*) of a given food is *b'cdai achilas pras*. This means that the time it takes someone to eat 3 or 4 *beitzim* of *matzah* is the time that one has to eat 1 *kezayis* of *matzah* which definitely more than 2 minutes. Someone who just eats normally would fulfill the obligation.

The Mishnah Berurah does not hold like the Minchas Chinuch and says that *b'cdai achilas pras* means the amount of time it takes a person to eat a *pras* of bread which is considerably less than the amount of time it takes to eat a *pras* of *matzah*. This might be around 3 minutes.

Rav Schechter actually holds like the Minchas Chinuch with this regard *halacha lmaaseh*.

There is a discussion of how big a *kezayis* is.

Rav Schechter said that it is about a piece that is 3x3 inches.

They say that the Steipler used to measure a *kezayis* by the palm of his hand.

Rav Schechter said that his father-in-law spent time at the *seider* of R' Shimon

Shkop who used to divide a 1 *matzah* into 5 or 6 *kezaytim* to give out to his guests. So it seems to be according to him that a 1/5 of a *matzah* is a *kezayis*.

One should be *machmir* for the *matzah* for the Torah obligation on the first night.

The Mishnah Berurah says that a person should be more *macmir* on the first *matzah* on the first night and try to fulfill the obligation with the bigger *shiur* of a *kezayis* which is a 1/2 a *beitzah*. However, for the other *kezaytim*, a person can use the more lenient opinion which is that 1/3 of a *beitzah* is a *kezayis*.

The "leaning" that is done at the *seider* is not just leaning into the air.

"Leaning" used to be a luxurious type of sitting where they would sit on fancy couches at their table which was more like lying down.

At the very least, a person should be leaning on something that is comfortable, such as a cushion.

Women are obligated to eat a *shiur kezayis* of *matzah* at the *seider*.

Women are obligated in all the *mitzvos* of the night. The Gemara in Pesachim says that anyone who is obligated in the prohibition to eat *chametz* is also obligated to eat *matzah*, as well as all the *mitzvos* of the night.

Women are obligated in the *mitzvah* of telling over the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. They should not skip the portions of *Maggid* which are required.

The *mitzvah* of telling over the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* is fulfilled by explaining the *pesukim* starting with *Arami Oved Avi*, having a question and answer, starting with our disgrace and ending with praise to Hashem, and saying the paragraphs starting with *Pesach, Matzah, Maror*. One probably does not need to say the story about the Rabannin in Bnei Brak or the story of R' Elazar ben Azariah to fulfill the *mitzvah*.

The "real" *marror* is the lettuce.

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A Mishnah in Pesachim lists vegetables that can be used for *marror*, and lettuce as the first one. We are confident that the lettuce that people use for the *seder* is the same lettuce that is stated in the Mishnah.

The Sefer HaChinuch actually says that it is a *hiddur* to use lettuce for *marror* because the word used for it in the Mishnah is *chasah* which can mean pity. This represents that Hashem had pity on us and took us out of *Mitzrayim*.

There are some *poskim* who say that if the lettuce is not bitter, one should not use it and should use a vegetable which is more bitter.

There are some *poskim* that did not want people to use lettuce because of the possibility that there were bugs in it.

However, according to basic *pshat* of the Mishnah, lettuce is the "real" *marror*.

As with regards to horseradish, some *poskim* say that it is listed in the Mishnah while others say it is not included in the list, however, it was the only thing we had which was bitter, since we did not have anything else on the list of the Mishnah.

There is no obligation for the child of telling over the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* to his father. Rather, it is *mitzvah* on the father to tell it over to his child.

The father/mother should do unusual things that promote the children to ask questions, and the answer should not just be "to promote the children to ask." Rather, the answer should relate to *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

One should not extend the *seder* so much so that he does not eat the *afikoman* until after *chatzos*.

The Gra says that a person just needs to finish the *afikoman* before *chatzos*.

Rema holds that a person should eat the *afikoman* and drink the 4 cups of wine before *chatzos*.

However, after a person eats his *afikoman* before *chatzos*, if he now wants to stay up later and say over the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, it is wonderful.

R' Baruch Gigi, a Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivas Har Etzion said that he was brought up from the age of 0 to stay up all night and say *Shir HaShirim*.

There is no *mitzvah* to eat a *kezayis* of *charoses*.

We *poskin* that a person should dip the *marror* into the *charoses* and then shake it off. One should not pile *charoses* onto the *marror* just because it tastes better than the *marror*. If one wants to eat *charoses* in the meal, it is totally fine.

There is *machlokes* whether there is a *mitzvah* to eat *charoses*. If there is, one should not have *charoses* on *erev* Pesach **just like a person should not have wine or *matzah* then. However, if there is no *mitzvah*, then he probably can.**

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It is told that the Chafetz Chaim, who was famous for his caution with regards to his speech and who composed several books on this matter, had a unique way to ensure he would not speak nor hear any Lashon Hara. As a person entered his room to speak to him, he would immediately begin talking about Torah and ethical improvement until the person left. In this way, he ensured that the conversation would not drift into topics which involved talking about other people. May we all follow the lead of the Chofetz Chaim and take extra caution with regards to our speech.



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Why Go To Aharon Hakohen? Ephraim Herrmann 9th Grade

In this week's parsha it says when someone gets tzara'as they have to go to the Kohen Gadol, Aharon, as part of their teshuvah process. Why is this?

The Torah says that someone gets tzara'as when they say Lashon Harah about someone else. A lot of people think that if someone says something true about another person it is not considered Lashon Harah. This, however, is not true. The aveira of speaking Lashon Harah is just speaking badly about someone.

If you would say something that is not true about someone, you would get the aveirah of lying in addition to the aveirah of saying Lashon Harah. There is one exception to this rule, and that is to make peace between 2 people. When Aharon would know 2 friends fighting he would tell one of them "I just spoke to your friend. He deeply regrets having said those harsh word to you. He really wants to apologize, but is so embarrassed because of what he said that he does not have the courage to approach you". Then he would go to the other friend and tell him the same thing and both friends would reconsider and make up. Since Aharon was so good at restoring peace, the Metzora (the one that got tzara'as) would come before him and he would tell him how bad the aveira of Lashon Harah was.

We can learn from this the importance of not saying Lashon Harah and understand the damage saying Lashon Harah about someone can do to them.

Koraych does not mean a sandwich; it means to wrap.

In Shas it means to wrap. The reason why people think it means sandwich is because our *matzos* are like crackers with which one cannot wrap something but rather make a sandwich.

Some *Rishonim* say that one is supposed to wrap the *marror* around the *matzah*.

However, we hold that we are supposed to wrap the *matzah* around the *marror*. The reason why it is called *koraych* is probably because *matztot* used to be like a laffa, and they would wrap the *matzah* around the *marror* and the *korban* Pesach.

The Hallel that is said during the seder is supposed to be said in the way where it is said when there are 10 people. This would mean that when people get to Hodo L'Hashem and Ana Hashem there should be one person who says it while the others respond accordingly.

Even though the Gemara describes that when they would say Hallel on the rooftops of Yerushalayim, the roof would cave in and it was an amazing experience, when a person gets to *Hodo L'Hashem* and *Ana Hashem* there should be one person who says it while the others respond accordingly.

This *halacha* is brought down by Rema in *siman* 479.

It is no so pashut that Eliyahu HaNavi comes to drink the wine at the seder let alone come to the seder in the first place.

It seems to be that the first mention of the cup of Eliyahu only came from the Achronim in the late 17th century.

There is a mention of the 5th cup which dates back to the Rif who says that the opinion of the Tanna R' Tarfon is that a person should have a 5th cup and that a person should drink that cup. Whereas the Rambam says not to drink it but to just pour it.

There are possible reasons why someone would think that Eliyahu would be involved with this. Since on Pesach we are celebrating our redemption from *Mitzrayim*, so too we want to hope for the future redemption with which the Gemara says (Eruvin 43) that Eliyahu will come a day before Moshiach and herald the coming of Moshiach.

It is quite possible that the *minhag* (recorded by Rema) of opening up the door for *Shfoch Chamascha* has nothing to do with Eliyahu, but for some different reason.

Holliness V. Impurity

Ari Katznelson 11th Grade

In the beginning of Parshat Tazria, we find pasukim use have similar phrases, but when you look closer at how these two pasukim are worded, there is a glaring difference. In the first set of pasukim, when it is talking about when the mother gives birth, it uses the phrase zachar and nekeiva, but when it talks about the mother giving the karbonos, it uses the words bein and bas. Why can't the pasukim use either just zachar and nekeiva, or just bein and bas. Rav Mordechai Gifter gives an answer as to why the different terminology is used in these pasukim. He explains that in the original pasukim, when the chumash has the words zachar and nekeiva, it is talking impurity. Rav Gifter explains that impurity is the result of one lowering himself and allowing the yetzer hara to overcome him. Rav Gifter explains that tumah is an animalistic trait, and that is why we refer to animals as zachar and nekeiva as opposed to bein and bas. On the other hand, holiness is bringing himself up, and that is a humanistic trait. Once she has given her karbon, she has raised her holiness level and that is why, in the end, the pasuk uses the words bein and bas.

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in my inn." The students sitting around the table perked up their ears. "Tell us what happened to you since then," the Baal Shem Tov continued. The villager told the following tale:

"When the Rebbe told me to come to him to Mezhibuzh and bring 100 barrels of the best wine, I firmly believed in the words of the Rebbe, and set out to do this. I sold everything I possessed, and bought 100 barrels of wine. Then I set out on my way. Toward evening, as we passed through a forest, a big storm broke out and torrents of rain fell. "The path was totally sodden with water, and the wagons were unable to move forward. I got off the wagon and, leaving the merchandise with the wagon drivers, I started searching for a house or inn in which to spend the night. "Eventually, I noticed a small light far ahead in the darkness. I went toward the light. Soon I reached a house in the forest. An old Jewish man with a flowing beard greeted me at the door. He invited me in. The house was warm and well-lit, and the old man treated me kindly until I warmed up. In the morning, after I said the morning prayers, I parted from the regal old man and went back to where I had left my wagons. However, there was no trace of them. It was as if they had vanished into thin air. "At first I was very upset and depressed. However, then I began to think that I don't have any reason to be upset. 'G-d gave and G-d took, may the name of G-d be blessed.' Surely it is all for the good, I decided. I began to walk, and then came upon a group of poor people traveling this way. I traveled with them until I came to Mezhibuzh." The poor man finished his story, and all eyes now focused on the Baal Shem Tov.

"Do you regret that you asked me to be blessed with life in the world to come? Perhaps you would prefer to get all your lost wealth back?" the Baal Shem Tov asked the innkeeper. "G-d forbid!" the man replied without hesitating. "Is the Rebbe suggesting that I give up my share in the world to come in exchange for 100 barrels of wine? Absolutely not, Rebbe. I am prepared to remain a poor person all my life, traveling from place

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stant divine providence. The pesach Seder is designed to help us fulfill the dictum, “in every generation a person is obligated to feel as if he left Egypt” (pesachim). We eat marror and charoset so that we can “taste” the bitterness of bondage and relate to the servitude that the Jews experienced. We eat matzah and drink the four cups of wine while reclining so that our bodies can sense the exhilaration of freedom. Why do we need to re-experience Yetzias Metzraim? Wouldn't retelling the miracles of mitzraim be sufficient to build our emunah?

The answer is that we are striving to achieve more than just cementing our belief in Hashem. We are trying to bring ourselves to a state where we, too are enveloped in Hashem's Hashgacha Pratis. We are meant to come to the new realization that “originally our forefathers worshiped idols and now Hashem has brought us into his arms”. On the Seder night, Hashem takes us by the hand and guides us. This is the ultimate Hashgacha Pratis. Unfortunately, Hashgacha Pratis is an abstract concept for many of us; we acknowledge it in our minds but it never makes its way into our hearts.

What is a practical application of Hashgacha Pratis to which we can relate to? Many people experience jealousy of another person's superior middos, perhaps, or of someone else's greater intellectual capabilities. Some gifted individuals might wish that they could forgo their talents so that they don't need to answer to all those who expect more from them. The solution to these problems is internalizing the concept of Hashgacha Pratis. Every person was put in his particular situation with a plethora of external and internal factors tailored to his unique purpose in life. It will not help to be like your neighbor or friend, because you will never accomplish what you have to accomplish. Rav Naftali Amsterdam once said to his rebbi, that if he would have the intellectual capacity of the Shaggas Aryeh, the heart of the Yesod V'shoresh HaAvodah, and the middos of Rav Yisroel Salanter, he would be able to serve Hashem properly. His Rebbi responded by saying “with your mind, with your heart, and with your middos, you can become the true person Hashem wanted you to be”.

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to place, if only I can merit life in the world to come!” “Indeed that is what I wanted to hear from you,” the Baal Shem Tov said. “A Jew needs to be ready to give up everything for faith in G-d. You accomplished this, and therefore you will merit life in the world to come.” A smile of pure happiness spread across the poor man's face. The Baal Shem Tov continued: “You are thinking that now you will have to wander with your friends for a long time. Well, that is not the case. With the help of G-d, tomorrow the wagons with the wine that you lost in the forest will arrive here. You will sell them for a nice profit, and you will once again be able to do the mitzvah of welcoming guests as before.”

Sure enough, the very next day, the wagons arrived as the Baal Shem Tov had said. The villager became wealthy, and continued to host guests in a generous fashion.

Adapted from Chabad.org

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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: TZVI GRUSHKO

The Baal Shem Tov once gathered a select group of his students and announced: "Come, I will show you someone who sincerely and wholeheartedly welcomes guests into his home." The Baal Shem Tov asked for his horse and wagon to be prepared for a trip. The wheels of the wagon flew through fields and forests, mountains and valleys. By late afternoon, the Baal Shem Tov and his students arrived at a village, and the wagon came to a halt in front of an inn. A Jewish man came running out of the inn to greet them. He called out: "Hooray, there are guests! Precious Jewish guests!" The innkeeper went over to the travelers and invited them into his home. "Come, dear rabbis, come into my home. You can rest up and eat something. You will refresh yourselves, and at the same time bring life to me! It's not every day that I am so fortunate to do the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim! The Baal Shem Tov responded, "Perhaps it would be better that we continue on our way to the nearby city. There we will have a mikvah, and we will be able to pray with the congregation and hear the Torah reading." "Oh, but I have a mikvah and a Torah scroll right here; and together with all of you, we will also have a minyan" the innkeeper said, entreating them to remain. He added that if they would like to pray in the city on Shabbat, they could walk there, because it was within the permissible area one is allowed to walk on Shabbat. In the end, the Baal Shem Tov agreed to the request of the innkeeper, and the travelers became his guests. While the innkeeper lived modestly, he offered his guests his best rooms and did everything he could to make their stay comfortable. After they had prayed, he invited them to a table set with delicious food. He himself stood by to serve them. On Shabbat morning, they all walked to the nearby city to pray. After Shabbat, the inn-

keeper prepared a lavish melaveh malkah feast (meal after the conclusion of Shabbat), and even invited many more guests from the area. He radiated joy as he greeted his guests and bustled around making sure everyone was cared for. The Baal Shem Tov and his students spent a few more days with the villager, who took care of all their needs personally and did everything in his power to make sure they felt at home. Before leaving, the Baal Shem Tov asked their host if he had any special requests. "My only request is that you pray for me that I merit life in the world to come," he answered. "The thing you ask for is dependent upon you," the Baal Shem Tov responded. "But if you want me to bless you, you must come to me in Mezhibuzh. And, by the way, I can give you some sound advice. Since in our country there is a shortage of wine, when you come, it would be worthwhile to bring with you 100 barrels of wine of the best kind, so that you can earn a nice profit." Time passed, and the students all but forgot about the whole episode. One day, the Baal Shem Tov said to his students, "Today a group of poor people came to our town. Please go and tell them that I am inviting them to my Shabbat meal." The students were very surprised to hear this. The local custom was that poor people and passing guests who came to town had all their needs met by the local committee in charge of accommodating wayfarers, who arranged meals and sleeping accommodations. And now the Baal Shem Tov was inviting this group to his house. When the poor folk were seated around the table, the Baal Shem Tov turned to one of them and invited him to come sit next to him. "Do you recognize me?" the Baal Shem Tov asked him. "Yes," the poor man answered. "I had the merit to host the Rebbe and his students

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