Points to Ponder

מצורע/הגדול תשעט

**זֹ֤את תִּֽהְיֶה֙ תּוֹרַ֣ת הַמְּצֹרָ֔ע This is the Torah of the Metzora (14:2)** - The Talmud (עבודה זרה י״ט:) tells the story of Rav Alexandri who would call out “who wants life” and when asked by the people to offer his elixir, he told them to protect their tongues from speaking Lashon Hara. Did the people really not know of the need to protect one’s tongue as a means of meriting long life? **Rav Yisrael Salanter** ztl. stressed the value of an example as a means of benefitting learning even of life lessons that are well known like מי האיש החפץ חיים. Even something this clear benefits from a stress on it via a story told by a peddler. **Rav Shmuel Rozovsky** ztl. added that the simplicity in the lesson is something that was highlighted by the peddler.

**וְהוּבָ֖א אֶל־הַכֹּהֵֽן: And he shall be brought to the Kohein (14:2) - Rav Yerucham Levovitz** ztl.would point out that Torah’s happens as a result of Lashon Hara which is often the result of a person’s reaction to the societal pressures around him. He is brought to the Kohein through a lack of self esteem that led him to make decisions to speak about others in order to build himself up. This is a severe contrast to the Nazir who brings himself (Rashi Bamidbar 6:13) irrespective of what others will say.

**וְשִׁלַּ֛ח אֶת־הַצִּפֹּ֥ר הַֽחַיָּ֖ה עַל־פְּנֵ֥י הַשָּׂדֶֽה: And he shall set the living bird out on the field (14:7) - Chizkuni** notes that the person is like the bird— he was tied down by his sin and now goes free to rejoin his friends. Why does Chizkuni need this example? It is obvious that the person is going from טמא to טהור? The **author of לתתך עליון** suggests that the example runs deeper. Lest the person think that s/he is too stained with sin that s/he has no  hope, the message here is that תשובה allows the person to rejoin society.

**וְעַל־בֹּ֤הֶן יָדוֹ֙ הַיְמָנִ֔ית On the right thumb (14:14)** - The right ear hears the לשון הרע and the right leg runs to listen to it. Why does the right thumb need a sprinkling? **Rav Noach Sauber Shlita** suggested that the thumbs which are active in transferring לשון הרע via text and email is also needing of atonement.

**וְנָֽתַתִּי֙ נֶ֣גַע צָרַ֔עַת בְּבֵ֖ית אֶ֥רֶץ אֲחֻזַּתְכֶֽם: I will place a Nega in the home(14:34)** - On the surface, this does not sound like a ברכה של ביאת הארץ. This is why **Rashi** notes that the Goyim hid their valuables in the wall and the Nega would indicate where to find it. **Rabbi Reuven Bulka** Shlita noted that the Torah is teaching us not to simply read tangible results when evaluating the human condition. Tangible is often confused with real and here appearance is not reality.

**וְצִוָּ֨ה הַכֹּהֵ֜ן וּפִנּ֣וּ אֶת־הַבַּ֗יִת The Kohein will command and they shall empty the home (14:36)** - **Rashi** notes that the concern here was for the kli Cheres that could not be kashered if declared Tamai. However, why the concern? The Kli Cheres would be able to be used...albeit in Tamai form. Why is there a concern? **Rav Elya Meir Bloch ztl.** explained that unlike food eaten when one is טמא which is one and done (once eaten it is gone) the כלי חרס remains and can only be used in one state. This is a concern for the person’s soul and how he will need to look at his gifts from Hashem as limited to a period of his life. This, the Torah showed רחמנות on him for.

**וְיָדָ֖יו לֹֽא־שָׁטַ֣ף בַּמָּ֑יִם And he didn’t rinse his hands (15:11)** - The Gemara learns that this teaches us about the need to wash Yadayim. **Rav Schachter Shlita** would point out the comments of the Pri Megadim who differentiates between the idea of Asmachta and Asmachta B’Alma. Asmachta means that this was the intent of Hashem. He left the hint with the intent that the Chachamim discover it and establish a Halacha. This is different than an Asmachta B’Alma.

**Haftara -- Shabbos HaGadol -- Rav Moshe Lichtenstein Shlita** notes that our haftara concludes the books of prophets, and should be viewed in relation to a broader historical context. The prophet is speaking to future generations who will not have prophets to turn to. Moshe concludes the era of the written Torah, and Malachi concludes the era of prophecy. Both warn the nation of the spiritual dangers that lie ahead, and emphasize the eternal connection between God and His nation, despite their sins.