Points to Ponder

Tazria/HaChodesh 5779

**אִשָּׁה֙ כִּ֣י תַזְרִ֔יעַ When a woman gives birth (12:2)** - **Rashi** notes that in the same way that man was created after all creatures, his “Torah” is taught after all of theirs as well. What is the connection between these 2 concepts? **Rav Wolbe ztl** quoted the Maharal who noted that one’s “Torah” defines how it will act. This is similar to the creation as it too, defined the nature of the creation. In other words, explains Rav Wolbe, the “Torah” is the completion of the person. Man had to come last in that it has more to complete and any missing aspect of his “Torah” can leave him like an animal...or worse.

**בַיּ֖וֹם הַשְּׁמִינִ֑י On the eighth day he shall have a Bris (12:3)** - The Midrash (Yalkut Yirmiyahu 33) notes that Shabbos and Milah had a debate as to who was bigger and Milah won with the argument that Milah supersedes Shabbos when they co-occur. **Rav Dessler ztl.** explains that Shabbos is an opportunity to infuse the physical with the spiritual. Milah is the removal of the physical. While both processes are crucial in our world, if one needs to be chosen over the other, removal in order to preserve Kedusha trumps the merger in order to infuse Kedusha into the mundane.

**לְבֵן֘ א֣וֹ לְבַת֒  And when the days are completed for a son or daughter (12:6)** - Earlier the child was referred to as Zachar or Nikeiva and now as son and daughter. Why the change? **Rav Shalom Schwadron ztl.** suggested that the answer is within the word “Tahara” for until a person is in a state of Tahara s/he is behaving in a more physical, almost animalistic style. Once the Yimei Tahara are upon us we relate in a more human manner -- with strong familial connections that raise our genders into familial roles -- that of Ben U’Bas.

**כֻּלּ֛וֹ הָפַ֥ךְ לָבָ֖ן טָה֥וֹר הֽוּא  It turned totally white (13:13)** - If Tzoraas exists when a white Nega appears, why is it when the entire body turns white that the person is Tahor? The **Chofetz Chaim** suggests that when a person sits outside the camp as a Metzora, he might think that until the entire body is white, maybe it is a false positive which prevents him from doing Teshuva. However when the whole body turns white, the person immediately sees the error of his ways and is already on the road to mend.

**וְהִ֨תְגַּלָּ֔ח וְאֶת־הַנֶּ֖תֶק לֹ֣א יְגַלֵּ֑חַ  And he shall be shaved and the Nesek should not be shaved (13:33)** The **Chinuch** explains that the reason behind this Mitzva is the idea that when Hashem sends a punishment for a person, it is good for the person to suffer from the punishment. He adds that the proper way to handle this is to daven to Hashem to save him. **Rav Pam ztl.** learned that part of the idea of the punishment is to grow from the experience. If one does not grow from the experience, it is merely torture.

**הַצָּר֜וּעַ אֲשֶׁר־בּ֣וֹ הַנֶּ֗גַע בְּגָדָ֞יו יִֽהְי֤וּ פְרֻמִים֙ וְרֹאשׁוֹ֙ יִֽהְיֶ֣ה פָר֔וּעַ וְעַל־שָׂפָ֖ם יַעְטֶ֑ה  His clothes shall be opened and his hair should be left uncovered (13:45)** - The Gemara (Moed Katan) compares the actions of the Metzora to those of the Avel. **Rav Schachter Shlita** would often point out that the Metzorah (and the one in Cherem) has the obligation to observe Shiva for himself since he put himself into the situation. And unlike the Avel, the Metzorah continues in his situation and practices even  on Yom Tov.

**בָּדָ֣ד יֵשֵׁ֔ב   He shall sit alone (13:46) - Rashi** explains that he sits alone because that is what he inspired in others by splitting apart husbands and wives and friends and neighbors. **Rav Avrohom Yofen ztl** explained that by nature we are designated to be separatists. Normally that trait is to be utilized to separate from unnecessary physical desire. However, if we do not use the nature that way, we will come to be separated in the manner of the Metzorah who is separated against his will.

**Maftir - Parshas HaChodesh** - **Rav Moshe Dovid Tendler Shlita** noted that the concept of declaring Rosh Chodesh is an affirmation of the authority of the Beis Din to interpret, protect and administer Torah authority. It is this authority that the Hellenists sought to undermine when they forbade Rosh Chodesh. It was also this power, reserved for those who are not easily swayed by hedonism that was taken away from Rabbi Elazar Ben Arach (Shabbos 147b) when he read “HaCheireish Haya Leebam” after being at the waters of Dumyeses and his declaration was an awareness that he needed to turn a deaf ear to the hedone lest the voice of Hashem become less audible. This is an essential lesson if we are to be able to be Marbeh in the Yetzias Mitzrayim story and appreciate all of the special components to it.

**Haftara - וּבַֽחַגִּ֣ים וּבַמּֽוֹעֲדִ֗ים And on the Chagim and the Moadim (Yechezkel 46:11) - Rav Zalman Melamed Shlita** noted that we use three different names for our Yamim Tovim -- Chag, Moed and Regel. Each denotes a different aspect of the celebration. The Chag refers to the Korban aspect of the holiday. Moed points to the idea that we rendezvous with Hashem at this time. Regel refers to the preparation that is needed to fully experience the holiday in its glory. **HaKsav V’HaKabbala** adds Mikra Kodesh because the adding of spiritual preparation enhances the Yom Tov experience.