Points to Ponder

Tazria/Metzora Master

**Topics of Tazria-Metzora** – The general Mitzvos of Parshiyos Tazria and Metzorah focus on 4 basic tumos – those of Yoledes, Metzorah, Zav and Zava. In the **Midrash (VaYikra Rabbba 19:3)**, these mitzvos are often referred to as “Shechora” or dark to be studied in public. Notwithstanding, Hashem wants to have them and accepts them pleasantly like Minchas Yehudah. **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl.** noted that these areas are often referred to as Shechorah for in the eyes of the learner, they seem more dry and unpleasant. However, one needs to approach ALL areas of Torah not with an approach of Shechorah but rather with a shine that all Divrei Torah are full and have what to offer even when it seems that some areas are more inviting to a particular person.

**אִשָּׁה֙ כִּ֣י תַזְרִ֔יעַ וְיָֽלְדָ֖ה זָכָ֑ר  Speak to Bnei Yisrael and tell them when a woman gives birth (12:2)** - **Rashi** explains that in the same way that man was created after all of the animals, his details are brought to us (now) after that of all of the animals. **Rav Wolbe ztl** explained that a person has much more to perfect than an animal. When he does so, he is great -- a final crown jewel to a lot of work. But when he does not, he is worse than an animal and, as such, his story comes after theirs.

**אִשָּׁה֙ כִּ֣י תַזְרִ֔יעַ וְיָֽלְדָ֖ה זָכָ֑ר  When a woman gives birth (12:2) – Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl**. noted that there are 2 words utilized in having children – Yesod and Binyan. The man gets Yesod from the father but is built up by the mother. Fathers lay groundwork of intellectual stamina in their children. Mothers, using Bina Yesaira, building on the base knowledge and using it to craft strong buildings on the solid foundations.

**אִשָּׁה֙ כִּ֣י תַזְרִ֔יעַ וְיָֽלְדָ֖ה זָכָ֑ר When a woman produces seed and gives birth to a male (12:2)** - While in regard to the issue of the birth of a boy, we mention that she produces seed, we do not do the same when we mention the birth of a girl. Why the difference? **Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl.** explained that the son remains associated with his parents’ family forever. His name and status will always be connected to the family tree he comes from (hence he is a seed). The daughter passes into the family of her husband and thus the title of the woman’s seed is connected to her son -- not her daughter.

**אִשָּׁה֙ כִּ֣י תַזְרִ֔יעַ וְיָֽלְדָ֖ה זָכָ֑ר When a woman has a baby and it is a male (12:2) – Rashi** cites the Midrash that notes that in the same way that man was created after all the other creatures, his laws (status) is listed after all of the other creatures whose kosher status is identified in Parshas Shemini. **Sifsei Chachamim** comment that technically the story of Parshas Metzorah should thus precede the story of Tazria for Metzora deals with the Tumah of a male while the Tazria story commences with the Tumah of a female? **Rav Yisrael Grossman ztl** (Rosh Yeshivas Karlin/Stolin and father of Rav Yitzchock Dovid Grossman Shlita) noted that they were created at the same time (See Eruvin 18a) and thus giving preference to the woman before the man is not a challenge. (Perhaps the preference is chronological – one needs to be born before one can be a Metzorah).

**טָֽמְאָה֙ שִׁבְעַ֣ת יָמִ֔ים כִּימֵ֛י נִדַּ֥ת דְּו‍ֹתָ֖הּ תִּטְמָֽא Like the days of her Niddah she shall be Tamai (12:2)** – Why is the term Tumah applicable to the concept of the conceiving mother? **Rav Yehudah Amital ztl.** noted that through the idea of Tumah, the Torah is teaching us that the fact that the sexual urge is natural does not mean that it is inherently a positive force. It entails impurity and must be corrected through circumcision. We have seen that the impurity of nidda arises as the result of potential life that is not realized. We must keep this lesson in mind: a person who fails to realize his inborn potential, is sinning and bringing impurity upon himself. A person must not only distance himself from sin, but also use all the powers that exist within him to perfect his personality and his character. A person who fails to strive and work to perfect himself is committing a sin.

**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.

**בַיּ֖וֹם הַשְּׁמִינִ֑י On the eighth day you should give him a Bris (12:3) – The Gemara (Shabbos 132a)** uses this text to show that a Milah happens even on Shabbos if it is on time. **Rema** seems to Pasken that one who does a Milah early is Yotzai. If so, asks the **Shach**, why do we not do so in order to avoid a Shabbos violation? **Sfas Emes** answers that if one is not Chiyav to do the Bris then, so one should not do the Bris then. This is the meaning of on the eighth day you should do the Bris – the eighth you CAN and prior to that point you may not.

**בַיּ֖וֹם הַשְּׁמִינִ֑י On the 8th day he shall have a Bris (12:3)** – Why does a baby have a bris on the 8th day and not at the time of his birth? After all, isn’t the lack of a bris a Chisaron? **Rav Hutner ztl.** explained that while many think a Tzaddik needs to fall 7 times and then later he will overcome, the real truth is that had he not failed the first 7 times, he would not overcome. The message is solid – one needs to experience the imperfect in order to perfect it. This is the message of delaying Milah for a week.

**She [the mother of a newborn] shall not touch anything sacred nor enter the sanctuary, until her purification period is completed" (12:4).** What does Kodesh have to do with Tumah? Are these not two different orders? **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl.** explained that the concept of Tumah and Kedusha are created by man’s activities. Man infuses the Kedusha and man is responsible for the concept of Tumah. Not every man, because someone outside the realm of kedusha cannot experience tum'a, defilement. Gentiles can live their lives in the "gray area." They do not have a world of kedusha, they have far fewer mitzvot to observe, and no ritual impurity affects them. The Jews were granted the possibility of reaching high levels of sanctity, they have many mitzvot and must adhere to a higher standard of values. But this is not given to us gratis. The elevated status of Am Yisrael carries with it tremendous responsibility, and one must ensure that he not diminish in any way the sanctity afforded to him. Anything in which we infuse kedusha must be guarded against tum'a. Herein lies the relationship between impurity and sanctity, a relationship that emerges throughout Sefer Vayikra.

**All Kodesh she should not touch (12:4)** – **Rashi** cites the Gemara which notes that touch here refers to eating. In other words, a woman who just gave birth should not eat Kodesh or Terumah. Why switch the words here specifically? Why would we assume that the word touch doesn’t mean touch? **Rav Yitzchock Knobel Shlita** points out that the Tumas Yoledes is a result of the elongated birth process. That process is the result of the sin of Chava. When one looks at the sin of Chava, one will discover that there too, there was a confusion between the word eat – which was Hashem’s command and the word touch which was Chava’s add on. In the same way that there the words are confounded, they are in regard to the future results as well.

**וּבִמְלֹ֣את | יְמֵ֣י טָֽהֳרָ֗הּ לְבֵן֘ א֣וֹ לְבַת֒ תָּבִ֞יא כֶּ֤בֶשׂ בֶּן־שְׁנָתוֹ֙ לְעֹלָ֔ה When the days of Tahara are finished for a son or a daughter (12:6)** – Why did the Torah switch from Zachar and Nekeiva to Ben and Bas? **Rav Shalom Schwadron ztl.** explained that there is a small homiletical lesson in the change. When a person has not lived a Tahor life as yet, s/he is living like an animal so there is no connection between him and an offspring but once the Yimei Tahara are completed and the person is living a life of Kedusha, then s/he does not have unattached offspring, they have a future.

**She should bring a dove or a Turtle dove as a Chatas (12:6)-** Why must she bring a Chatas? Where is her sin**? Rav Avraham Rivlin Shlita** entertained many possibilities; that she swears at the time she is having children from the pain, that she pains the Neshama of the baby by bringing it into this world, or that she atones for the sin of Chava which has made childbirth so difficult for women. After these examples, he quotes **the Shem MiShmuel** who notes that the mother who brings a child into this world now presents with a vacuum where the potential for life and the spiritual soul was. This vacuum serves as a breeding ground for Tumah. The Yoledes brings a Chatas not for a transgression but rather because it allows her to resume the partaking of Kodashim. There was no sin but there was Tumah. The removal of the Tumah presents her with a new status, coming to that new status is the reason for the bringing of the Chatas.

**She shall bring a year old sheep as an Olah and a dove as a Chatas (12:6)** – **The Baal Haturim** asks that normally a Tor appears in the Possuk before the Ben Yonah. Why is it reversed here? He answers that normally they are brought as a pair but here when a single one is brought, Hashem prefers that the Ben Yona be brought first. Why? **Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein** Shlita explains that a Tor only lives with its spouse. Taking the spouse then, effectively ends the life for the remaining Tor. Thus, it would be better for the Ben Yona to be taken because there is a future in it and for it.

**וּבֶן־יוֹנָ֥ה אוֹ־תֹ֖ר לְחַטָּ֑את And a dove or turtle dove as a Chatas (12:6)** - What is the purpose of this Chatas? **Professor Nechama Lebowitz** suggested that when a woman has given birth and experienced a closeness with her Creator in the process and now after birth, is aware of her smallness in contrast to Hashem’s creative ability, she feels the urge to bring a Chatas on realizing and appreciating the gap in creative ability.

**This is the Torah of the one who gives birth (12:7)** – Why does this Possuk appear in the middle of the story – after the Korban of the wealthier woman who has a child and then the Torah digresses after this possuk to speak of she who cannot afford the Korban? Why is the summary in the middle? **Rav Chaim Kanievski ztl.** explains that when the Gemara (Nedarim 35b) notes that the Korban of the Yoledes applies whether she is personally wealthy or whether only her husband is wealthy. The husband can bring Korban Yoledes on behalf of his wife. Thus, the possuk summarizes here --- this is the rule – that this Korban be brought --- unless both wife and spouse are not able to afford it. The Sar Shalom of Belz explained that Hashem blessed Am Yisrael here in general – that they should be able to bring Korban Yoledes from a perspective of wealth.

**וְהוּבָא֙ אֶל־אַֽהֲרֹ֣ן הַכֹּהֵ֔ן He will be brought to Aharon the Kohein (13:2)** - A kohen can’t pasken on his own negaim. The Mishna’s language is כל הנגעים אדם רואה חוץ מנגעי עצמו. Why not? The Ba’al Shem Tov says: כל הנגעים אדם רואה חוץ, מנגעי עצמו. If you want to see the messages that G-d is sending you, look at the flaws you see in others. If you can see that flaw in others, it’s a message that you need to work on it as well. The Peleh Yo’etz says: We are so good at identifying where others make mistakes and we have a difficult time seeing our own imperfections.

**וְהוּבָא֙ אֶל־אַֽהֲרֹ֣ן הַכֹּהֵ֔ן  And he shall be brought to Aharon the Kohein (13:2)- Rav Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ztl**. noted that it is interesting that the Metzora who is punished for his Lashon Hara, who is brought to Aharon HaKohein Specifically. Why? Rav Twerski explained that for the sake of promoting peace in families, Aharon was a bit loose on the exact Emes in order to promote Shalom. This Metzora is brought to Aharon to see just how serious his own actions – that destroyed peace by telling Lashon HaRa – are to be perceived as the ideal of Shalom is one to be preserved in the ideal society.

**When a person has a Seies on the flesh of his body (13:2) – Rav Nosson Tzvi Wachtfogel ztl.** notes that there is a commonality in the 7 things that cause Negaim. They all lead a person to decide not to be a fair partner with the world. As a result, the person thinks that everything is his -- and that others lack value in his life. Thus, the person speaks badly about the others, does not lend to them, etc. He/she can only see that which is his and all is, in his mind, his. This is the Tzaar Ayin of Tzoraas.

**When a man has a blemish in his skin (13:2) – Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that unlike the beginning of Sefer VaYikra, this time the word “Meekem” does not appear. **Rashi** explains that just like man was created after the rest of the creations, his Torah (the Torah of his Tumah) is offered afterward as well. And as by creation – the man who builds on creation, deserves and identifies as a crowning moment of creation. If not, he is lower than anything created. Citing **Rav Soloveitchik ztl**. Rav Schachter explains that when a person lives a Jewish life that includes Meekem, he is not external but ideal. However, when one sins, it is a result of external influences – it does not come from his internal sense and therefore the word Meekem would not apply.

**The Kohen shall look at the affliction on the skin of his flesh; If hair in the affliction has turned white, and the affliction’s appearance is deeper than the skin of his flesh –- it is a Tzara’as affliction; the Kohen shall look at it and make him impure.” [Vayikra 13:3]** – Why is there a double stress on the looking of the Kohein? And what difference does it make if he is looking (V’Ra’ah) versus looking at (V’RaAhu)? The **Meshech Chochma** explains that there are 2 calculations that the Kohein must make in diagnosis here. First he must see to it that the issue of Tzoraas is even relevant. Once there, he must check the person to see if he is one able to handle the diagnosis – a Chosson, for instance, would not be included in the diagnosis. Since the Torah’s ways are Darchei Noam, the instructions are provided accordingly.

**And the Kohein shall see and the white Se’es on the skin (13:10)** – This week’s Parsha seems to imply that the color white is a color of Tumah and Tzoraas. When it comes to the Sa’eir HaMishtaleiach and Yom Kippur in general, we treat white as a sign of Tahara.How can the same white be a sign both ways? **The Otzaros Hatorah** points out that when a person sins Bein Adam L’Chaveiro, then even the greatest signs of purity turn on him.

**כֻּלּ֛וֹ הָפַ֥ךְ לָבָ֖ן טָה֥וֹר הֽוּא: It all turned white, he is Tahor (13:13)** - The Gemara (Sanhedrin 97) uses this possuk to describe the period of Moshiach’s arrival when impudence and insult will be rampant among the Jewish people. Why is whiteness the symbol used to represent this dark period? **Rav Schachter quoted Rav Soloveitchik** who noted that whiteness denotes clarity or lucidity or that which is rational and logical. A spiritually healthy person needs to be able to combine that lucidity together with the blue or mystery, ambiguity and esoteric. Being totally rational leads one to arrogance and ultimately heresy. The contrast of Moshiach’s holiness against his generation’s heresy will be highlighted and meaningful.

**כֻּלּ֛וֹ הָפַ֥ךְ לָבָ֖ן טָה֥וֹר הֽוּא It all turned white, it is Tahor (13:13)** - Usually Tumas tzoraas is indicated (on the body) with a white color. Why the, if EVERYTHING turns white, it is Tahor? **Rav Pinkus ztl.** explains that like with the situation when setting siege on a city where we are obligated to leave one side open so that the people can retreat, and if we do not Hashem will be upset with us and side with the helpless, the Metzorah who is totally Tamai also has no recourse and we allow him to be Tahor since Hashem is watching out for him too.

**כֻּלּ֛וֹ הָפַ֥ךְ לָבָ֖ן טָה֥וֹר הֽוּא And the Kohein shall see that the Tzoraas has covered the entire body and he will declare the person Tahor (13:13)** – **Rav Shimon Schwab ztl**. notes that Tumah can only exist where there is something Tahor to contrast to it. If the environment is totally off – then there will be no Tumah. Similarly, the Gemara (Sanhedrin 97a) notes that Moshiach cannot come until the Malchus turns to Minus (heresy) because, when there is no Tahara the Rishus will fade away like smoke.

**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.

**כֻּלּ֛וֹ הָפַ֥ךְ לָבָ֖ן טָה֥וֹר הֽוּא It all turned white, it is Tahor (13:13)** – How could the very sign of Tumah be Tahor if it suddenly all encompassing? **Rav Schachter Shlita** mentioned that there is a Gemara that notes that Moshiach cannot come until the entire world turns to heresy. Rav Schachter compared it to Reishis HaGeiz. When one gives Reishis, he cannot give it all to the kohein. The **Meleches Shlomo** explains that when we make something Kodesh, that Kedusha is enhanced by its contrast to Chol. The same is true, suggested, Rav Schachter in the opposite, we cannot have Tumah if there is no Tahara contrast.

**וּבְי֨וֹם הֵֽרָא֥וֹת בּ֛וֹ בָּשָׂ֥ר חַ֖י יִטְמָֽא On the day that live skin can be seen he shall be Tamai (13:14) – Rashi** explains that there are certain days we do not even check. A Chosson for instance, is given 7 days of the Sheva Berachos in order not to ruin the days. **The Eretz Tzvi of Kosenglov ztl.** asks how a Chosson can even get Tzoraas if on the day of his Chuppah he is forgiven for his sins? **Rav Menachem Zeimba ztl. Hy”D** answered that this is true for the day of the Chuppah but not for the subsequent days. The **Imrei Emes** adds that when one is forgiven for his sins, that is Bein Adam L’Makom. But the Bein Adam L’Chaveiro Aveiros are not forgiven. Tzoraas is a means of punishing the sins Bein Adam L’Chaveiro and if one is guilty of sinning there, he needs to ask Mechilah.

**וּבְי֨וֹם הֵֽרָא֥וֹת בּ֛וֹ בָּשָׂ֥ר חַ֖י יִטְמָֽא On the day healthy flesh appears it shall be Tamai (13:14)** - Rashi cites the Mishna that explains that for certain days -- Yamim Tovim or a Chosson’s Sheva Berachos, the Kohein does not look at potential Negaim. **Rav Yaakov Bender Shlita** highlighted the incredible sensitivity expressed by the Torah here -- the right of every Jew to enjoy a Sheva Berachos or a special Yom Tov highlighted in the absence of taking away his simcha. The Baal Lashon HaRa took that away from someone else but we do not want to take that sensitivity away from him.

**אֵֽין־בַּבַּהֶ֨רֶת֙ שֵׂעָ֣ר לָבָ֔ן וּשְׁפָלָ֥ה אֵינֶ֛נָּה מִן־הָע֖וֹר The hair (13:26) - The Midrash Tanchuma** tells the story of a certain Kohein who was an expert in diagnosing Tzaras. He wanted to go to Chutz La’Aretz in order to make money so he tried to teach his wife how she could diagnose the Tzaras in his absence. In the course of the training, he told her that if she sees a hair whose pore has dried up, this was a telltale sign of the Tzaras as each hair has a specific and unique pore, created by Hashem just for that hair to draw sustenance from. If the pore dries, so does the hair. His wife told him that his own training should be his guide. Hashem creates each one of us with a place -- a reservoir for Parnassa and we do not need to seek it from someone else or somewhere else. Hence she did not let him go to Chutz La’Aretz. **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** utilized this Midrash to highlight the Hashgacha Peratis that Hashem has for each of us. He sets a specific Parnassa for each of us -- like the hairs -- that cannot be taken by anyone else. He will decide what each of us is entitled to, and how we will make it. (In fact, many of the reasons Tzaras come are for sins that come from people reaching beyond their own reservoir and trying to take away from someone else’s -- from their self-status, their means, their fortunes etc. It would do us well to learn the lessons of the hairs in order not to need the Nega to show us where we are “off” in our assessments of ourselves.)

**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.

**It is a Bohak and it is Tahor (13:39)** – Why must someone bring an obvious skin malady to the Kohein in order to have him be Mitaher it? Why can’t a Talmid Chacham merely know that this is not a question? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl**. explains that one needs to understand that any change in one’s life, any illness or any misstep, is a reminder about something s/he needs to consider changing. Going through the process reminds the person to reconsider his/her experience and the actions that might have spiritually contributed to it.

**He is a man with Tzaraas he is Tamai, The Kohein shall surely make him Tamai for his Tumah is in his head (13:44) – Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein Shlita** quotes the **Netziv** here who differentiates between the Tzoraas of the body and that of the head. The one of the body are a result of the sins of Taavah. At the same time the one of the head are a result of the sins of the mind. The latter ones are more serious and need extra precaution when treating. Rav Zilberstein uses this logic to point out that when custody decisions are made, choosing between a guardian who suffers from Taava is better than choosing the spouse who has dangerous philosophies.

**בְּגָדָ֞יו יִֽהְי֤וּ פְרֻמִים֙ וְרֹאשׁוֹ֙ יִֽהְיֶ֣ה פָר֔וּעַ וְעַל־שָׂפָ֖ם יַעְטֶ֑ה His clothes shall be torn and his head covered and hair grown long (13:45) - Rav Schachter Shlita** would often note that the style of the Metzorah is that of a person who is in mourning for himself while still alive. It is the same as the one who is in Cherem who also acts inappropriately and therefore also observes Aveilus as a dead man walking. Today, Rav Schachter notes that it is no Mitzvah to declare a Metzorah if there is no way to reverse his status. Simply putting the pressure with no way out is not likely to bring the people closer to Hashem, it is more likely to take them away.

**וְטָמֵ֥א | טָמֵ֖א יִקְרָֽא: He shall call “Tamai, Tamai” (13:45)** – The gemara (Shabos 67) compares this to a tree which is falling and is strengthened with stones at its base and painted in red. The stones are for the strengthening and the red is so that passersby see and pray for it. **Rashi** cites our Possuk as proof – that the Metzora says Tamai in order to get others to daven for him. But what is the comparison? **Rav Chaim Friedlander ztl.** explained that this is the power of Nosai B’Ol. We do not need to know how much pain the person is in, we just need to know that there is another living being that is suffering and that our prayers are needed.

**וְטָמֵ֥א | טָמֵ֖א יִקְרָֽא: And he shall be called Tamai Tamai (13:45)** – Why is the word Tamai repeated twice? **Rav Shmuel of Slonim ztl**. likened the situation to one holding on to a magnet. The magnet attracts metals. Even if the person does not want to attract metals, holding onto the magnet makes him susceptible to metals being attracted to him. The only way out is to let go of the magnet. The same is true in regard to Negaim – or Avairos in general – the style needs to be dropped in order to see to it that the avairos cease.

**וְטָמֵ֥א | טָמֵ֖א יִקְרָֽא: He will be called Tamai (13:45) - Rashi** explains that he needed to say he was Tamai. The Talmud (Shabbos 67a) says he needed to tell people so that they would daven for him. Why does the Gemara come to that conclusion? Maybe he needed to say he was Tamai so that the people would stay away from him? **Rav Dovid Povarsky ztl**  explains that if that was the reason, he would call to the people not to become Tamai. By drawing attention to his own Tamai status, he was really letting the people know that he was Tamai and that they could keep him in their Tefillos.

**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.

**He shall remain alone outside of the camp is his place ( 13:46) – Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** notes that the Metzorah concept is not one based upon a physical disability or contagious illness. If it were, it would not be dependent on the Kohein who would be able to delay his Psak for circumstantial reasons. The reason he needs to go out of the camp is because he needs to separate himself from the Chevra wherein he was able to sin in order to contemplate his avenue for Teshuvah. The choice is in his hands – proving that the experience and punishment are indeed divine.

**בָּדָ֣ד יֵשֵׁ֔ב Alone he shall sit, outside of the camp is his place (13:46) – Rashi** notes that this teaches us that others who are Tamai should not be with him. Why is this the case? **Rav Yisrael Salanter ztl.** explained that the sending of the Metzora outside is due to his or her incredible ability to find fault within everyone else. Rather than let that talent go to waste, we remove him from society so as to let that talent – finding fault – get its proper time working on the person himself. **The Brisker Rav ztl**. added that Yonah was on a boat surrounded by Ovdei Avoda Zara and still recognized his obligation to see the troubles befalling him as being connected to him.

**בָּדָ֣ד יֵשֵׁ֔ב Alone he shall sit, outside of the camp is his place (13:46)** – The **Yalkut Shimoni** mentions that there is a difference of opinion as to whether the Metzora must move 4 or 100 amos away**. Dr. Jack Cohen** explained that perhaps the difference of opinion is whether one must move a technical “Halachic” distance which is usually 4 Amos or perhaps a distance whereby his speech is not able to be heard (100 Amos). **Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro** added that today the distance might include travel to a location where there is no cell reception or data plan if we would be able to refer to the person as truly Badad.

**וְרָאָ֨ה הַכֹּהֵ֜ן אַֽחֲרֵ֣י | הֻכַּבֵּ֣ס אֶת־הַנֶּ֗גַע The Kohein shall see after the Nega is cleaned (13:55)** – The Zohar notes that the letters of Nega and Oneg are exactly the same. When one learns the lesson of the Nega, it can turn into an opportunity for Oneg as a result. **Rav Leib Lopian ztl**. notes that the only difference between Nega and Oneg is where the Ayin is. If you look before you leap there will be Oneg. If not, it can lead to Nega.

**לֹֽא־הָפַ֨ךְ הַנֶּ֤גַע אֶת־עֵינוֹ֙  It didn’t change Its appearance (13:55)** - While **Rashi**, based on the Sifra, defines the word *eino* as “its appearance”. The **Chidushei Harim** homiletically explains that the word can be understood as “eye” as well. He cites the Gemara in Arachin 16a that lists *tzarus ayin,* literally translated as narrowness of the eye,as one of the negative traits that would cause someone to develop a *tzarras* affliction. He explains, therefore, that what the Torah is teaching is that the reason why the *negah* is deemed *tamei* is because this individual did not change his “eye”, from looking at other people in a negative light to looking at others in a positive light. He even adds that the word *negah* and *oneg* (pleasure) are the same spelling except for the placement of the letter *ayin.* The difference between affliction and pleasure is where the eye is.

**This is the Torah of the Nega Tzoraas for purity or impurity (13:59)** – The Toras Kohanim learns that it is a mitzvah to both be Mitaheir and Mitamei Negaim. Yet we do not do this today. **The Chofetz Chaim** suggests that perhaps the reason for this inaction is the following: since we no longer have a beis hamikdash and cannot bring korbanos, and as such would not be able to complete the tahara process once the tzoraas clears up, we have no right in the first place to declare the individual tomei. **Maran HaRav Schachter Shlita** learns a valuable lesson from here. Namely that purifying oneself from tuma represents the idea of teshuva (repentance). We would only punish a sinner with the declaration of being a living "gavra ketilla" if we see a chance for him to do teshuva. But if we really do not think this will be accomplished, and the only result we can foresee is that those who are non-observant will simply become more anti-religious, then starting the process off is useless.

**זֹ֤את תִּֽהְיֶה֙ תּוֹרַ֣ת הַמְּצֹרָ֔ע This will be the rules for the Metzorah (14:2)** - The **Or HaChaim** teaches that one who speaks negatively about his fellow is still called a baal lashon hora, even if what he says is the truth. When one sins, he is called a **baal** aveirah, baal lashon hora but when a boy reaches the age of thirteen, he is called **a bar**mitzvah. Why the difference between Baal and Bar when it comes to Aveiros vs. Mitzvos**? Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein Shlita** notes that in regard to mitzvos we are considered children (of), since we do not separate ourselves from our parents. Through mitzvah observance we remain close to them and Hashem. When one chooses the path of sin, he has gone apart and owns his own path – he is a Baal Avairah.

**זֹ֤את תִּֽהְיֶה֙ תּוֹרַ֣ת הַמְּצֹרָ֔ע  This will be the Torah of the Metzorah (14:2) - The Rambam** (Hil. Tumas Tzoraas 16:10) notes that Tzoraas does not apply to the non-Jews. Why? **Rav Kook** ztl. explained that there are two types of speech. The mundane which is the hallmark of the speech of the non-Jew which has no room for elevation and holiness and the holy, which is our language which has the potential for Kedusha. When opportunities for Kedusha are wasted, we are left bereft and Tumah sets in. Hence, Tzoraas is a quality for Jewish speech only.

**זֹ֤את תִּֽהְיֶה֙ תּוֹרַ֣ת הַמְּצֹרָ֔ע This is the story of the Metzora (14:2)** - The Midrash tells the story of a certain peddler who went from town to town asking who wanted life and when Rav Yanai went to check how was amazed to see that the peddler was showing the possuk of “Mi HaIsh HaChofetz Chaim”. Why is it important to know that the man was a peddler (literally a spice peddler)? Also, why did Rav Yanai think the Peddler had taught him something so new? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl** explained that the man was really a peddler but he engaged in Seforim on the side. His message was that it was actually easier for us to avoid Lashon HaRa than our forefathers. The reason was that we have the benefit of the Torah whose knowledge already predisposes us not to speak Lashon HaRa.

**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.

**תִּֽהְיֶה֙ תּוֹרַ֣ת הַמְּצֹרָ֔ע This is the Torah of the Metzorah (14:2**) – What is the Torah of the Metzorah? Is there a different one than for the rest of us? The **Pardes Yosef** explains that in **Chovos HaLevavos** the author notes that one who speaks Lashon Hara loses his mitzvos and his Torah merits. Thus, at the time he finally does Teshuva, he is beginning his own Torah accounting anew.

**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.

**וְיָצָא֙ הַכֹּהֵ֔ן אֶל־מִח֖וּץ לַמַּֽחֲנֶ֑ה The Kohein shall go out of the camp (14:3)** - The Kohein is both diagnostician and nurse. Why is it the job of the Kohein to play this role for the one with Tzaras? **Rav Soloveitchik ztl** noted that in the olden days, the sick were outcasts in the community. Upon diagnosis the sick became outcasts in the community and the person was either killed or driven out of the city. We do the opposite. We bring our Kohein to diagnose the situation and immediately remove “the mob psychoses”. We retain the dignity of the Metzora in the process by sending the Kohein with him to show that he is our friend and that we seek not only his repentance but his dignity and welfare as well.

**And behold the Nega has healed from he who has Tzoraas (14:3)** – Why is he still called a Tzarua if the Nega has healed? The **Daas Kedoshim** explains that so long as he has not had the chance to tell Lashon HaRa again, his Teshuva is incomplete. Thus, he is still a Tzarua until the opportunity for growth happens**. Rav Aharon Shteinman ztl.**  notes that the Toras Kohanim notes that the Tahara is dependent upon the Kohein’s declaration that he is Tahor. Without the declaration, the person remains Tamai.

**The Kohein shall command and shall take 2 birds that are Tahor (14:4)** – **The Zohar** writes that one bird is the bird for Lashon HaRa and the other is the bird for Lashon HaTov. Why would one need to bring a bird for speaking Lashon haTov? **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl. (Shemen HaTov)** explains that the lack of encouragement is also an Avaira. A similar concept is expressed by **Chasam Sofer** who explained that the reason Moshe spoke to Chochmei Lev even if they already were granted Chochma was that he was to encourage them to let them know he believed in their abilities.

**שְׁתֵּֽי־צִפֳּרִ֥ים חַיּ֖וֹת טְהֹר֑וֹת And he shall take 2 live Tahor birds (14:4)** - The **Zohar** mysteriously explains the korban of two birds as necessary to bring one bird for bad speech and one bird for good speech. **Rabbi Yissacher Frand** questions this statement. There is an apparent need to bring a korban to atone for bad speech, like Loshon Hora, but what warrants a sin offering for good speech? The **Shemen Hatov** explains that sometimes we have the opportunity to offer positive reinforcement yet we remain silent. In this situation, one might think that they are doing nothing wrong – nothing negative was said! Yet, the lack of positive reinforcement can be just as demoralizing as negative speech, if not worse. Therefore, one does not only need to bring a korban for the bad speech, but even for the good speech, or lack thereof.

**שְׁתֵּֽי־צִפֳּרִ֥ים חַיּ֖וֹת טְהֹר֑וֹת And he shall take 2 live birds (14:4) -  Rav Dovid Miller** pointed out that in Parshas Metzora and in Acharei Mos we have cases of taking two animals, to face two destinies. In one we send one bird free to live, killing the other, and there seems to be no particular pomp to deciding which is which. In the other, one Sa’ir is sent off the cliff to his death, the other killed to be offered as a Korban, and there is an elaborate ceremony to determine how each dies. We would think that the decision of life and death for the birds would be more significant than that of how each particular Sa’ir dies. In truth, though, life and death is not in our hands, and not for us to fret over – its in the hands of HKB”H. HOW we live our lives, however, LaHashem or LaAzazel, that is a weighty determination that is worthy of focus and celebration.

**Shni Tolaas (14:4) – The Chida** tells a story of a certain philosopher who once explained to the Chida that the reason why we ride on horses and cows is that in the food chain, they are food for people. Riding on them is a sign of domination. The Chida retorted that based on that argument, that humans are worm food and accordingly we should be enslaved to them? He explained that a life without Hashem in it is indeed Sheni B’Tolaas --- secondary to the worms.

**And the Kohein will command and he shall take for the one seeking Tahara…cedar .. and a hyssop (14:4).** – In the Haftorah normally read on Parshas Tazria, we read of Naaman the general who was told, via the agent of Elisha, how to restore his health. Naaman was incensed as to why Elisha did not come to speak to him directly. Why didn’t Elisha want to meet with Naaman directly? **Rav Yitzchock Knobel Shlita** explains that one of the things that brings Tzoraas is Gasas HaRuach – haughtiness. Rashi explains that the one with Tzoraas who thinks he is like a cedar, must humble himself like a hyssop. Elisha understood that Naaman’s anger was indicative of his lack of understanding about this basic principle and so by not meeting with him directly, it encouraged Naaman to seek a reason and ultimately to be humbled in front of Hashem.

**וְאֵזֹֽב And an Eizov (14:4)** - According to Rashi the use of the Eizov is to remind us of humility. **Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ztl** noted that the person who speaks Lashon HaRa usually suffers from vanity -- a lack of humility. The use of the Eizov instead of a Schmooze on Lashon Hara is because humility is not something that can be instructed, it must come from inside There are many opportunities that may stimulate the insight but the ultimate responsibility to look inward is ours and we will find it if we look.

**עַל־מַ֥יִם חַיִּֽים On the living waters (14:5) - Rav Dr. Yonatan Grossman** notes that there are a number of references in the text to the fact that the metzora experience is a like an experience of death (Chazal tell us מצורע חשוב כמת). At the same time, the sending of the metzora out of the machaneh, is like a mourning experience. He is, in essence, mourning himself. Yet there is a notable transition. When the metzora begins his purification process, the word חי appears numerous times. Live birds are used and the water is called מים חיים. It is a transition from death to life.

**The live bird shall be taken (14:6)** – Why is one bird left alive while the other is Shechted? The Midrash answers that in the same way something that is slaughtered can never return to its previous state of living, so too, the person afflicted with Tzoraas can never return to speaking in the same way**. Rav Yaakov Ettlinger ztl.** explains that once someone receives the Makkah in his body, he can never sin the same way again. The process is progressive – Tzoraas afflicts the money (home) first followed by the clothes and then the body. Thus, once afflicted, the person has the chance to learn not to desire that which is not rightly his, and not to desire personal honor and attention(as he experienced negative attention as a result of the Tzoraas), it helps to see to it that he lives but the negative side of him, is restored and improved.

**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.

**And he shall atone on his Tumah (14:19)** – What kind of Kappara is needed on the Tumah itself? **Rav Simcha Zissel Broide ztl.** explained that the Metzorah’s physical and social suffering is immense. It is understandable that the Metzorah, in the midst of his pain and aloneness would contemplate Hashem and His middos. He might even challenge Hashem in the process. Therefore, a kappara on the Tumah itself is offered in addition to the Kappara on the rest of the process that led to the Tzoraas.

**And if he is poor (14:21) – The Toras Kohanim** explains that there are 2 terms that describe poor – Dal and Ani. The difference is whether he can afford. The person who lost money is still obligated to bring the expensive korbanos here if it is feasible but difficult. Why? The Torah is teaching us a valuable lesson – that despite the fact that the person is financially strapped and normally the Torah wants the person to have a bit of a respite, it was his actions that led to Tzoraas require him to step up to the plate and take responsibility for them.

**This is the story of the one who has Tzoraas within him (14:32)** – Why is the poor person with Tzoraas referred to as “Asher Bo HaNega” as opposed to the rich person who is merely a Metzorah? **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin ztl.** explains that there is nothing more odd and shameful than the poor person who displays his Gaava and speaks Lashon Hara. Such an approach is indicative that the Nega is deeper than on the surface – it is inside of him, at the soul.

**When you come into the land…I shall place a Nega Tzoraas on your homes (14:34) – Rashi** notes that this Tzoraas was a good sign of hidden treasure. Elsewhere, the **Tanchuma** explain s that Tzoraas on the house was a lesser punishment than tzoraas on the body. How are we to make sense of this apparent contradiction? Is it a prize or a punishment to find Tzoraas on your home**? Rav Moshe Wolfson Shlita** explained that it is both. Really the Tzoraas on the home is meant as an indication of a transgression. Otherwise, Hashem could reveal treasure in another way. However, in the same way we do not want the punished to speak ill of others (hence the Tzoraas) we do not want people to speak of him publicly. Thus, the means of hiding the punishment of the individual within the general opportunity that the Tzoraas is a blessing provides the individual with a perfect cover to examine his own meaning of the Tzoraas on his home.

**I will place a Nega Tzoraas in your home (14:34) – Rashi** notes that it is a promise that they will find Tzoraas on the home in order to demonstrate wealth in the home. Couldn’t Hashem find a different sign to show that he wanted to give the people the Canaanite wealth? **Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn Shlita** once pointed out that walls serve both to protect from the inside and to serve as barriers from the outside as to whether one may continue. Rabbi Einhorn suggested that the same is true of wealth as well. It can serve to protect or as a barrier to how far one may go. At the same time, it is also used often to sin. One needs to be careful to make sure to use it properly or it can be a sign of sin.

**When you go into the land of Canaan that I am giving you to possess, I will place a Nega in the homes of the land you possess (14:34)** – Why is the land referred to as “Eretz Canaan that I will give you”? Why is it also referred to as Eretz Achuzatchem? **Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer ztl**. notes that one of the reasons for Negaim is Gaava. When the people enter the land and think to themselves that it was their strength alone that got them Eretz Yisroel – that is Gaavah. It will bring on Tzoraas. Rather, one needs a sense of humility (Hachnaah = Canaan) and when one has it, one will realize the fact that Eretz Yisroel is a gift from Hashem.

**כְּנֶ֕גַע Something like a Nega appeared in my house (14:35)** - Who cares if the ba’al habayis says “nega” or: “kanega? **Rav Aryeh Leibowitz Shlita** suggested that humility is inherent in the act of questioning. Speaking with a sense of overconfidence is inappropriate and goes against the very act he’s doing. We’ve all had the experience where we ask questions and got answers that seemingly made no sense, but then we figured out we just had it all wrong. He added that **Rav Mordechai Willig Shlita** has pointed out on many occasions that “I don’t teach halacha; I teach ratzon Hashem. When we approach a Shailah we need the humility to ask to figure out that Ratzon.

**כְּנֶ֕גַע K’Nega Nirah Lee BaBayis (14:35) – Rav Zvi Hirsch Meiels ztl.** asked why the language of the person coming to the Kohein is with the non-committal “ K’” ? He answers that once a Shaylah is answered, even by the individual, it is wrong to seek a Heter. Moreover, he adds that one should not answer the question before the Kohein as it is a sign of disrespect. Here there is an advantage to his displaying care – it saves his material possessions.

**וְיָצָא֙ הַכֹּהֵ֔ן אֶל־מִח֖וּץ לַמַּֽחֲנֶ֑ה The Kohein shall go out of the camp (14:3)** - The Kohein is both diagnostician and nurse. Why is it the job of the Kohein to play this role for the one with Tzaras? **Rav Soloveitchik ztl** noted that in the olden days, the sick were outcasts in the community. Upon diagnosis the sick became outcasts in the community and the person was either killed or driven out of the city. We do the opposite. We bring our Kohein to diagnose the situation and immediately remove “the mob psychoses”. We retain the dignity of the Metzora in the process by sending the Kohein with him to show that he is our friend and that we seek not only his repentance but his dignity and welfare as well.

**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** ztl. 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.

**And the Kohein shall command and they shall remove the stones to the outside of the city (14:40) –** The Rash quotes a Tosefta which explains that stones with Tzoraas must be removed from all cities in Eretz Yisroel. Why the cities yes and the farms and countryside no? **Maran HaRav Schachter Shlita** was fond of quoting **Rav Menachem Zeimba ztl.** who noted that the Kedusha of the cities was part of the Kedushas Beis HaMikdash in a lower level form while the country-side was only endowed with Kedushas Eretz Yisrael. The former cannot co-exist with Tzoraas while the latter can.

**And he shall wash in water (15:5) – Rav Rivlin Shlita** points out that the concept of a mikvah is linked to the concept of rebirth with an eye toward Tahara as the goal. He is quick to quote **Rav Goldvicht Ztl.** who notes that the Mikvah sheds the Chessed of Tumah (a world of desire) for a Chessed of Tahara. Thus, there can be no Chatzizah – the entire body must be at one with the experience.

**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.

**And his hands were not washed in water ()** – Why would one think that the hands are unique? The Gemara notes that this is a Remez to Netilas Yadayim. The Gemara notes that the hands are on the outside so too, the water needs to get on the outside not the Beis HaSesarim. Also, Maga Beis HaSetarim does not count. Both rules are learned from Yadav. **Rav Schachter Shlita** quoted the **Pri Megadim** that there is a difference between Asmachta and Asmachta B’Alma is that the latter is just a reference but the Asmachta means that Hashem wanted it to be discovered in that it was written that way.

**Mayim Chaim (15:13)** – The Chumash makes a distinction between Mikvah which needs to be standing still versus a Maayan which needs to flow. A Zav needs to be Toivel in a Maayan. Similarly, the ash of the Para Aduma needs to be in Mayim Chaim (though the Tamai Meis himself needs to go to Mikvah). The

Metzorah’s bird needs to be dipped in Mayim Chaim as well. **Rashi** quotes from the Geonim that like a Zav needs Mayim Chaim so too, a Zavah needs Mayim Chaim. Elsewhere, Rashi says that this is not so. **Rav Schachter Shlita** pointed out that this is the more accepted position and this is why when a woman goes to Mikvah she does not have to go to a Maayan. The **Bach** suggested that Mayaan is necessary only to be matir her from Tumah. To be able to allow her to return to her husband perhaps a mikva is enough but explanation is not accepted by all.

**And she shall count for herself (15:28)** – Must she count out loud? **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that perhaps even Tosafos might agree that the Zavah need not count 7 days verbally. Still, Tosafos seems to be of the opinion that the count would have had a Beracha – similar to that of the Sefiras HaOMer. How can a Beracha be recited on a cognition without any action associated with it? Rav Schachter suggested in the name of Rav Soloveitchik ztl. that perhaps the count is a means of allowing the Bedikah. Since a Bedika is an action then the count can have a Beracha immediately prior to the concrete action that is the Bedikah.

**And you shall caution Bnei Yisrael from their Tumah and they shall not perish when they enter my Mishkan in their midst (15:31)** – What is the need to mention that the Mishkan was within their midst? The **Nesivos Shalom** explains that the reference here is to the heavenly portion that is inside each person. Simply that Hashem cannot handle dwelling in the Tumah within the person who is Tamai.

**And you shall warn Bnei Yisrael from their Tumah and they shall not die in their Tamai state when they make my Mishkan Tamai (15:31) – Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** notes that the warning to separate close to the Veset (Shavuos 18b) is taught by the Zavah on purpose in order to highlight that even when a situation is out of the ordinary, one is obligated to try to avoid having an Ones.

**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**

**There were 4 Metzoraim ()-** The commentaries identify the 4 Metzoraim as Geichazee and his sons who were smitten with Tzoaas because he rebelled against the word of Elisha. Why was Geichazee doomed to a life without the possibility to do Teshuva? The Talmud actually castigates this idea (See Sotah 42a) adding that one should not be like Elisha and Geichazi rather Smol Docheif VYemin Mikareves. Why should one not adopt the approach of Elisha ? **Rav Aharon Kahn Shlita** explained that we need to be exceptionally careful of how we rebuke. He added that the Rasha at the Seder does not even get addressed (he is spoken “about” but not “to”) since he is not really ready to hear. But to turn our backs on him and to not teach him the road to Teshuva is dangerous. We need to be careful of rejection – Elisha rejected Geichazee and according to some, the latter went until he was responsible for putting the Shem HaMiforash into the Avodah Zara of Yerovam.

**And there were 4 men who had Tzoraas were outside the gate (Melachim II 7:3**) – Gechazi’s Tzoraas was brought on by the false promise that he had pledged to Elisha. Most times, it happens because of Lashon HaRa. **The Netziv** writes that the reason that Tzoraas does not afflict us today is that we would not get the message. The sins that bring on Tzoraas afflict the soul and Tzoraas would bring on great physical pain and embarrassment that would disrupt his life. This, says **Rav Pam ztl**., would be an early alert warning to change one’s trajectory of life. However, the fact that it does not happen today is a major disadvantage as the sin compounds and the ability to get beyond it becomes almost herculean.

**וּמְצָאָ֣נוּ עָו֑וֹן And we will be found to be sinful (Melachim II:7:9)** - What was the big sin? **Rashi** in Divrei HaYamim(I:21:8) explains that the use of the extra vavs shows us that not reporting things to the king is considered a MAJOR sin. The **Mussar HaNeviim** adds that when we consider that the Metzoraim in this story are Geichazi and his sons, who got Tzoraas because of their stinginess, Preetzus and was interested in money but sinning against Hashem’s nation is considered an even MORE egregious sin than those. Geichazi would not cross THAT line.

**And Hashem let forth the sound of chariots and horses and of a great army** – Why was it necessary to have the sounds of the chariots and of the horses if there was already going to be the sounds of the great army? Also, why did the people of Aram leave their horses and donkeys in the camp when they ran away? Wasn’t it easier to flee on horse or donkey than to flee on foot? **Rav Aryeh Leib Pleta ztl.** suggests that Hashem wanted to return the Jewish wealth lost to Aram. If the Aramians would have fled on horse or donkey, then the Jewish nation would not have gained the lost livestock. Therefore Hashem had the Arameans think that if they took their animals, they would be discovered as the animals might make noise when the Jews came out looking for them on horse and chariot. They knew that in such a case the individual Aramean might not get away and that their own horses and donkeys might give their hiding places away. Therefore, the noise of the horses and chariots added to the victory and the miracle.

**: “And they crushed him against the gate and he died (Melachim II: 7:20) – Rav Tzvi Tau shlita** explains that the sentry was not guilty of challenging Hashem’s ability nor the Nevuah of the Novi Elisha. Rather, his sin was in his “Hareidiyut” wherein he believed that Hashem would not WANT to save the Jewish people. It was in his lack of belief in his people that when they were indeed saved, he was killed in the crushing onslaught.

**Haftara Shabbos Rosh Chodesh**

**כִּי־חָ֛לָה גַּם־יָֽלְדָ֥ה צִיּ֖וֹן אֶת־בָּנֶֽיהָ: For Tzion has been ill and also birthed her children (Yeshayahu 66:8)** - The Haftarah describes the Geulah and the return of the people in two critical areas -- the pangs of childbirth and the speed of delivery. In our Haftara, the pains of labor are almost absent and the speed relatively quick. Yet, Micha (7:8) and other sources seem to suggest that there will be labor pains. Yirmiyahu (31:7) seems to suggest that the timing will be longer. How do we reconcile these sources? **Rav Avrohom Rivlin Shlita** suggested that the reconciliation is dependent upon us. If we are worthy, the pains will be limited and the speed quick. If we are not, there will be pains and the labor will take time. It is all part of Nevuah Nezilah and it is dependent upon us to help the Nevuah come to the fore.

**HAFTARA PARSHAS HACHODESH**

**Parshas HaChodesh-** While the korban Pesach earns the central focus of the maftir reading, it appears in but one verse in the haftora. The haftora deals primarily with the dedication of the future Bet Hamikdash which begins with the sacrifices on the first of Nissan, continues with sacrifices on the seventh of the month, and proceeds to the korban Pesach and sacrifices throughout the festival and those on Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh. **Rav Yehudah Shaviv ztl** suggests that Yechezkel’s prophesy may have been selected as the haftora for Shabbat Ha-chodesh precisely to contrast this prophecy with the maftir reading - the beginning of the redemption as opposed to its culmination. The process began with the Paschal sacrifice in Egypt, and it concludes with the Mikdash and the service therein. This is exactly the picture that emerges from the listing of God's acts of kindness that we recite in the Haggada ("Dayenu"). We begin with "hotzi'anu mi-Mitzrayim" - the Exodus from Egypt - and end with "bana lanu et Bet Ha-bechira" - the building of the Bet Hamikdash.

**When the people would come before Hashem on the appointed days whoever enters the North gate is to leave by the south gate (Yechezkel 46:9) – Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz ztl.** explains that that the reason why the people were told to leave from a different gate than the one they entered is due to the fact that people tend to become bored with repetitive acts and look for change. The Torah wanted the Aliyah L’Regel experience to be fresh and inspiring – not habit. Therefore the people were told to go in a different way than the one they came – to provide a unique variety**. Rav Pam ztl.** would often add that the same is true for the Mechanchim. A Mechanech does not teach Chumash or Gemara – he teaches Talmidim. By focusing on the students as people, the newness and freshness of a curriculum becomes exciting.

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.

**בָּֽרִאשׁוֹן֙ בְּאֶחָ֣ד לַחֹ֔דֶשׁ In the first month (Yechezkel 45:18) – Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl**. noted that the first month referenced here is the month of Nissan. When Moshiach comes these will be the Korbanos that will be offered on the dedication of the next Beis HaMikdash. When the Shechina rested on the people the first time, it was Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the next one will be then as well.

**HAFTARA Shabbos Hagadol**

**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.

**And he shall return the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Malachi 3:24) – Rav Pam ztl**. noted that for centuries it was the children who left the parents and tradition that they offered. Our generation has seen the opposite – children who leave their parent’s commitment to a secular life for a life of Teshuva. One could never have imagined it! This similar to Pesach whereby one could never have imagined the change from bondage to freedom.