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## maskil Le'David

### Modeling Proper Behavior for our Children

**"When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male"**  
 (Vayikra 12:2).

The *parshiot* of Tazria and Metzora are often combined, read on the same week for the Shabbat morning Torah reading. Our Sages teach us that there is no such thing as coincidence. Therefore, combining two *parshiot* which seemingly have no connection cannot be happenstance; there is some inherent lesson to be derived from this.

Parshat Tazria begins with the laws of a woman who gives birth and thereby becomes impure. It then continues with the matter of the *tzara'at* affliction that is found on the body and clothing. It would seem more fitting for these laws to be found in Parshat Metzora, not Parshat Tazria; there must be some connection between these matters. We will endeavor to identify this connection.

A Jew is afflicted with *tzara'at*, either on his body or clothes, for speaking lashon hara about his fellow Jew. The word "*metzora*" (מצורע) hints to "מוציא רע" – giving a negative report. The punishment of the *metzora* is measure for measure: Since he spoke derogatorily about his friend and caused others to distance themselves from him, he too is punished by being distanced from others.

The Torah wishes to teach us that just as the *metzora* is punished measure for measure, his offspring too will grow up "measure for measure." Usually, a child witnesses his father's conduct and behaves in a similar fashion. In the same way, a girl imitates her mother's behavior as she grows up. Therefore, the Torah put the *parshiot* of Tazria and Metzora together to impart an important lesson: we must not expect our children to be better than us; if we wish to have well-behaved children who follow in the path of the Torah, we must serve as a positive example for them.

A person's children are called his "seed" because offspring have the same nature as seeds. It is not possible to plant apple seeds in the ground and then find that an orange tree sprouted, because an apple seed will always produce apples. It is the same with one's children. If a

person is forgiving and modest, his offspring too will be like him. But if one is arrogant with dishonest *middot*, his children will learn from his ways and follow in his footsteps.

Parents often come to me crying bitterly that their son or daughter does not behave appropriately, does not obey them, and sometimes even oversteps the limit and wishes to marry a gentile *r"l*. They want me to talk to their children and persuade them not to take this drastic step. Of course, I try to encourage and help as much as I can but at the same time, I reprove those parents, for it is not happenstance that their children turned out in this way. If a child did not observe his parents following in the path of Torah and mitzvot, never saw his father going to participate in a Torah shiur or his mother lighting Shabbat candles, what is Judaism for him? He therefore has no second thoughts about crossing the limits and marrying out of his faith. Because what a person sows is what he will reap in the future.

A father once came to me and told me that his son wants to commit suicide. I told him that something must be bothering him. A child of that age does not have the responsibility and stress of providing for a family, and he does not suffer from medical problems that are common to older people. Rather, he enjoys an easy and secure life. So why should he want to commit suicide? The father rolled his eyes at me, as if I did not understand. However, I knew from experience what probably caused the child to entertain these kinds of thoughts. I asked the father if his son watches violent films *r"l*. When he answered that his son enjoys these types of films, I told him that this is the answer to his question. This young boy spends his day watching scenes of slaughter, murder, and worse; his impressionable soul cannot differentiate between truth and fiction. He has lost his appreciation for human life. He therefore has no problem ending his own life, even without a logical reason.

The punishment of the *metzora* is different from other Torah penalties because it involves two aspects of retribution. The fact that his body is afflicted with *tzara'at* is one punishment, while the Torah adds another punishment: he must leave the camp and stay far away from other people.

It appears that the reason for this is due to Hashem's great kindness. Hashem desires to present a strong deterrent for people to stay far away from this sin even though it is so easy to transgress. There is nothing easier than opening one's mouth and speaking about someone else.

cont. p.2.>>>

1 Iyar 5786  
 18 April 2026

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Tazria Metzora



## Hilula

**1 Iyar**  
 Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapira, Rosh Yeshiva of Be'er Yaakov

**2 Iyar**  
 Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, Rosh Yeshiva of Chazon Yaakov

**3 Iyar**  
 Rabbi Reuven Sharbani

**4 Iyar**  
 Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveichik

**5 Iyar**  
 Rabbi Bechor Binyamin Melamed

**6 Iyar**  
 Rabbi Yehoshua Hakohen Perachia, a Salonika Sage

**7 Iyar**  
 Rabbi Refael Oved Ibn Tzur, Dayan of Pass





## PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

### The Mitzvah of Brit Milah Overrides Shabbat

**“On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised”** (*Vayikra* 12:3).

The mitzvah of brit milah has already been delineated in Parshat Lech Lecha, as it says (*Bereishit* 17:12), “At the age of eight days every male among you shall be circumcised.” If so, asks Rabbi Avraham HaLevi *zt”l* (who lived in Chala, Teiman) in his *sefer Pardes Rimoni*, why does the Torah once again mention this mitzvah here?

He quotes the Gemara (*Shabbat* 132a) which explains that from the wording of the verse in this Parsha, **“On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised,”** we derive that the mitzvah of milah overrides the mitzvah of Shabbat.

The question is, why in Parshat Lech Lecha does the Torah not use the expression “on the eighth day?” Why does the Torah wait until Parshat Tazria to teach us this?

The reason could be as follows. Had the Torah written this lesson in Lech Lecha, there would be place for the mistaken perception that the mitzvah of Milah overrides Shabbat only for our holy forefathers who had not yet received the Torah and had not been commanded about Shabbat observance. But Am Yisrael were commanded about the severity of Shabbat, as we are told, “Its desecrators shall be put to death” (*Shemot* 31:14). They might conclude they need to push off brit milah if the eighth day falls on Shabbat. This is why we are commanded here with the wording, **“On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised,”** to teach us that even now, after the Giving of the Torah where we were commanded about Shabbat, milah overrides Shabbat.

### The Gates of Heaven Are Closed for the Metzora

**“He is to call out, ‘impure, impure!’”** (*Vayikra* 13:45).

The double term **“Impure, impure”** is explained by the Gemara (*Shabbat* 67a) to mean that the *metzora* must publicly announce his affliction, and as Rashi explains, “he himself” must do so.

But why must the *metzora* publicly announce his affliction, something we do not find with other sicknesses?

The answer, explains the Divrei Yonatan, can be found in Rashi on Parshat Vayera concerning Yishmael, where it says, “G-d heard the cry of the youth.” Rashi explains, “From here we learn that the prayer of the sick person for himself is preferable to those of others who pray for him.”

The holy Zohar writes that he is called a “*metzora* in quarantine” because Heaven is closed to his prayers.

Therefore the *metzora* needs to publicly announce his distress – so that others *should* pray for mercy for him. With other sicknesses, the patient’s own prayers are preferable, however, since a *metzora*’s prayers are not accepted, he must announce his distress to others so that they should pray for him and arouse Heavenly mercy.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust  
penned by Moreinu  
v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Rabbi  
David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

### Non-kosher Food – Teeming with Prohibitions

I heard this dreadful story from the person to whom it happened. He told me that once he was traveling by plane and was ravenously hungry. Of course, normally he would not eat from the standard airline meals since they are not kosher. But then his hunger overtook him; he entered the kitchenette and asked for a non-kosher meal. His plan was to eat only the vegetables, which he decided do not pose a problem of *kashrut*. **This is actually a fallacy, and as we will see, he stumbled with eating forbidden foods.**

The salad needed some flavor so the man added some pre-packaged vinegar which came along with the meal. However, this vinegar was not made from alcohol but from wine – a Torah prohibition. Although the man made sure not to eat the non-kosher sea foods that were part of the salad, they lent flavor to it, therefore rendering the whole thing non-kosher. So although he ate only vegetables, he in fact stumbled with eating *treif* food!

**One might presume it is permissible to eat parts of a non-kosher dish, which by themselves would be kosher. But this is a very complex issue and almost impossible! Therefore, one must be careful to eat only food with a kashrut symbol, certified by a trusted kashrut supervisor.**

*cont. from p. 1 >>>*

The Chovot Halevavot writes: “Many people will arrive at the day of reckoning, and they will be shown their deeds recorded in their book of merits; merits that they did not perform. They will say, ‘We did not do these?!’ They will be told that these are the merits of people who spoke derogatorily about them. Similarly, when they do not see certain merits they expected to see inscribed they will ask about them... and will be told they lost them when they spoke about so and so.”

How great will one’s distress be on that day! When a person is punished for sins he committed, it is terrible – especially when talking about the Heavenly retribution of Gehinnom! But when a person will be punished for sins that he did not even do, and only because he spoke derogatively about his friend did he “merit” all those sins, it will be sevenfold harder!

Therefore, Hashem wanted the *metzora* to receive a difficult punishment in This World! In this way, man will learn to refrain from transgressing this sin and will distance himself considerably from forbidden speech.

## WORDS OF THE SAGES



### A Correct View of Lashon Hara

The name given to the *metzora* (מצורע), Chazal tell us, reflects his deeds – “מוציא רע”, he speaks derogatory words. The holy *sefarim* explain that by opening one’s mouth and relating derogatory words, one causes the accusing angel to open its mouth and begin speaking negatively about us, accusing and causing terrible suffering.

There is a great difference between the sin of negative speech and other sins, points out Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi Reuven Karlenstein *zt”l*. With all other sins, it is necessary to perform some actual act, even the slightest, so as to transgress the prohibition. For example, to transgress the prohibition of *borer*, selection on Shabbat, one must remove a small bone from the fish. However, with the sin of *lashon hara* it is not necessary to do any action! A person can transgress this sin while doing nothing; he is just releasing hot air...

On the other hand, the sins of negative speech are so severe, to the extent that the Gemara says (*Erchin* 15b), “Anyone who speaks *lashon hara*, his sin is considered as great as the three cardinal sins of idolatry, immorality, and murder.” Yet these verbal sins are so “accessible” and easy to commit. As we mentioned, it is unnecessary to do anything. In just a matter of a few words, terrible destruction can be unleashed! Especially at a time of anger, when stormy feelings and tumult abound, words are released without any thought! And sometimes people deceive themselves, saying it is “for the sake of Heaven.”

What is the suggested counsel?

Our rabbis quote the words of the verse (*Vayikra* 13:9), “He shall be brought to the kohen.” They explain as follows: We must approach the kohen, “the kohen who is exalted above his brethren” – this refers to the Chafetz Chaim. We must study his *sefer Shmirat Halashon*. This is the way to strengthen oneself and not stumble with forbidden speech. As the Admor of Gur declared, “Heaven and earth can testify about me that I experienced a favorable change after studying the Chafetz Chaim’s *sefer*.”

One of the Slabodka *talmidim* approached the Rosh Yeshiva, the gaon Rabbi Izsak Sher, with the following dilemma. “I have a big problem! I have an unconquerable temptation to speak *lashon hara*! Especially when it comes to stories that others have not yet heard! It is a feeling as sweet as sugar and this temptation burns inside me like fire. Can the Rosh Yeshiva give me some advice on how to overcome this and not stumble?”

The Rosh Yeshiva answered, “Your father came to me two weeks ago and wanted to know how you are doing. He made a favorable impression on me. I want to know if also about him, your father, you are tempted to speak *lashon hara*?”

“No,” replied the *talmid*, “I have no desire to speak *lashon hara* about my father.”

“And do you feel that you have withstood a challenge when you don’t speak about him? Do you feel that you are overcoming a temptation when you keep your mouth closed?”

“No. I have absolutely no temptation to speak about my father. It is not even a challenge for me.”

“Why? Does your father not have any faults?”

“There is no person without faults; my father too has weaknesses. Nevertheless, I have no desire to speak about him. Not only this, but if I would hear someone else speaking *lashon hara* about him, it would give me no rest and I wouldn’t be able to fall asleep at night.”

“Try to explain this to me. Why is this? How is he different to anyone else?”

“I don’t want to speak about my father! I love him! And when one doesn’t want to speak, one doesn’t speak.”

“If so, you yourself have just given a wonderful piece of advice on how to overcome the temptation and not speak *lashon hara* about someone. Love him! If you love him, you won’t want to speak about him!

“And when one doesn’t want to speak, one doesn’t speak.”

This, then, is the principle! So and so has shortcomings? So what? Your father also has faults; your son also has faults! More than this, you too have faults! Nevertheless, there is no temptation to speak *lashon hara* about someone you love!

## FROM THE TREASURY



Based on the teachings of Moreinu v’Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

### First of All – Judge Favorably

When a person does not see the truth as Hashem does, he doesn’t judge others favorably which leads to speaking *lashon hara* about them.

This is the connection between the three *parshiot* of Tazria, Metzora and Acharei Mot. Taking the first letter of each *parsha* spells “אמת” (truth). This implies that after a person dies (*Acharei Mot*) he will see how mistaken he was; he perceived falsehood, not the truth. Even though he thought he was speaking the truth about his friend, it was only in This World that it appeared to be the truth. Up there in the Next World he will be faced with the bitter truth: how much destruction his words caused, how much damage his mistaken assessment caused him and his friend, and even actually resulted in causing the Holy Shechina to depart.

Rav Yosef son of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (*Pesachim* 50a) told his father after returning from the World of Truth, “I saw an upside down world.” Meaning, those in This World who were not considered distinguished, are honored in the Next World, and the opposite is also true. The World of Truth is extremely exact, and a person is judged for every act that he committed in This World.

In any case, when a person does not judge his friend favorably, it means he did not try hard enough to think what might have brought his friend to commit that negative act. Chazal have told us (*Avot* 2:4), “Do not judge your fellow until you have reached his place.” And if you were in his place, you too might have acted the same way. If so, even if he thought his words were purposeful and permitted, it follows retroactively that he has spoken *lashon hara*, for what he saw in his friend was only a reflection of his own shortcomings.

This is the essence of the connection between these *parshiot*. When a person sows, “Tazria,” and speaks *lashon hara* about his friend, he will become a “Metzora,” for he will be punished with *tzara’at* for inevitably spreading false reports (*motzi shem ra*) about him. His rectification will only be “Acharei Mot,” when G-d forbid he will die.

For every person was created in G-d’s image and by speaking *lashon hara* about someone he causes others to lose their regard for that person, as if he is not part of G-d’s image. In this way he has G-d forbid made him appear to be “dead” in the eyes of others, as Chazal famously say (*Erchin* 15b), “*Lashon hara* kills three: The one who speaks, the one who listens, and the one spoken about.”

# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Words Don't Cost Money but are Worth Gold



The Torah commentaries discuss the inevitable question of why Parshat Tazria, which discusses the laws of the different types of skin afflictions, follows Parshat Shemini which primarily discusses the subject of forbidden foods.

The gaon Rabbi Yisrael Slanter *zt"l* explains that the afflictions are a result of the sin of *lashon hara*. While most people are extra careful not to consume forbidden foods and meticulously examine their food to ensure they do not ingest the tiniest insect, they are not particular enough when it comes to the honor of others and sometimes chew them with their mouths and tongues and swallow them alive. This is why the Torah put the *parshiot* together: to teach us that just as you are careful with forbidden foods, so must you be as careful, if not more, with forbidden forms of speech; we see that the purification process of a *metzora* is stricter than for one who consumes forbidden foods. This demonstrates the severity of the matter and the great value of being cautious with our words.

It is related that once Rabbi Yisrael Meir Hakohen *zt"l*, the Chafetz Chaim, travelled together with another rav on behalf of a certain mitzvah matter. Along the way, they stopped off at an inn to eat something. The woman who owned the inn immediately recognized both distinguished personalities, sat them by a special table and made sure they would be served appropriately. When they finished their meal, she approached them and asked, "How did you like my food?"

"Very good," replied the Chafetz Chaim. "And what do you say?" she said, turning to the other rav. His answer was not long in coming, "Quite good, but it was a bit too salty." As soon as the woman heard this, she made her way to the kitchen. The Chafetz Chaim turned pale and became very agitated. "I

can't believe it! My entire life I have refrained from speaking and hearing *lashon hara*. Why then did this happen now, that I heard *lashon hara*? Had I known this in advance, I would have not set out on this journey!"

When the rav saw the Chafetz Chaim's reaction, he grew frightened. "What did I say? What was so bad about my words? I said that the food was good, and only added that it would have been better to use a bit less salt!"

"You do not know how to sufficiently value the power of words," replied the Chafetz Chaim with distress. "It could be that the cook is a poor widow who needs her job. Because of your words, the owner will blame her that the food was salty. In her defense, the poor widow will deny her words and say that she did not put much salt into the food, and even tasted the dishes before she served them."

"And then," the Chafetz Chaim continued, "the owner will claim that she is lying and say, 'Do you think the rabbanim are liars? You are the one who is lying!' They will argue and the owner will grow so angry that she will dismiss the unfortunate cook who will be left without a job."

"Consider how many sins you caused," added the Chafetz Chaim. "You spoke *lashon hara*, you caused the owner and me to hear *lashon hara*, you caused the owner to repeat the *lashon hara* to the cook, which is already *rechilus*, you caused the cook to lie, because of you the owner distressed a widow, and you caused dissension between two people."

When the Chafetz Chaim finished his words the rav said quietly, "I think you are greatly exaggerating! It cannot be that the words I said caused all of this!"

"Let's go to the kitchen and see," suggested the Chafetz Chaim.

They stood by the entrance to the kitchen

and noticed the cook wiping tears from her eyes. The rav grew pale, hurried over to the cook and apologized for the harm and pain that he caused her, begging her to forgive him. After that he turned to the owner and pleadingly asked her to forgive the cook and allow her to continue working for her. He even offered a sum of money, as long as she would not dismiss the cook.

The owner was a kindhearted and generous woman. "Of course, of course," she said. "The cook will continue working for me. Her job is not in jeopardy at all. I only wanted her to realize that she must be careful. She is an excellent cook and will keep her job."

There is a clever saying that is often quoted, says the gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein (*Pri Amaleinu*): "Words do not cost money but are worth their weight in gold." They can raise a person's spirits even if he has fallen into depression and heartbreak. About this the holy Zohar declares (*Tazria* 46:2) that just as a person will be judged after his passing for distasteful words and obscene language (if he did not repent), so too will he be judged for all the warm and encouraging words, words of praise and approval *that he could have said* but refrained from saying.

You could be in Kollel or at work and see a friend who was successful and did something good, but you don't mention a word. You will be judged for it! You could have energized him and made him happy! Why did you not do this? Or you may notice that a good friend bought a nice outfit or new utensil. Praise, offer a good word! It doesn't cost money but is worth more than gold.

Speech can revive a person, and on the other hand can destroy and kill. Let us decide from today on to offer a good word whenever possible, to show happiness for someone else, encourage or express appreciation when we can, and we will merit great happiness.



**"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"**

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