



# The Marcos and Adina Katz YUTORAH IN PRINT

## Metzora 5774

### Of Gechazi, the Rasha in the Haggadah, and the Rambam's "talmid she'eno hagin"

Rabbi Aharon Kahn

**T**he haftorah of Parshas Metzora begins with four metzora'im sitting outside the besieged city's gates. Chazal identify them as Gechazi and his sons. Their leprous affliction was visited upon them as a consequence of Elisha's terrible curse: "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto you and unto your seed for ever" (Melachim II 5:27).

Let us remember the setting for that terrible curse. Naaman, the afflicted Syrian general, had dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of G-d, Elisha, and miraculously, his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child. In humility and gratitude, Naaman returned with all his company and stood before Elisha, saying: "See now, I know that there is no G-d in all the earth, but in Israel. Now therefore, please take a gift from your servant." Elisha, however, refused. Elisha, moreover, took an oath: "as Hashem lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none." Naaman urged him to reconsider, but Elisha again refused.

Elisha, as a navi of Hashem, had been offered gifts in the past and he had accepted them. For example, Elisha accepted the gifts of the great Shunamite woman and her husband. (See Brochos 10b contrasting Elisha with Shmuel.) But in Naaman's instance, Elisha refused. Had he accepted a gift from Naaman, Elisha would have tarnished his image as the emissary of Hashem, and he would have diminished the miracle itself. It was critical to Elisha that the purity of the miracle should match the purity of Naaman's skin. To Elisha, it was urgent that Naaman remember his healing at the hand of Elisha as a moment of perfect kiddush Hashem.

After Elisha had repeatedly refused Naaman's gift, Gechazi chased after Naaman and convinced Naaman that Elisha had had a change of heart. Gechazi received from Naaman two talents of silver and two sets of clothes. It was then that Elisha cursed Gechazi, his talmid. Naaman's healing would no longer be a perfect kiddush Hashem. Gechazi, Elisha's disciple and servant, had forever cheapened that moment in the eyes of Naaman. By Gechazi's greedy deed, Naaman

was made to think that Elisha perhaps planned all along to take from Naaman. Now, after Gechazi's actions, Naaman will remember the words of Elisha's great oath as the pretensions of a schemer who desired to convey saintliness. Naaman would be convinced that Elisha used Gechazi so that through the device of a concerned servant, Elisha both protected his image and received his gift.

It is small wonder that Elisha was despairing and distraught. Gechazi had forever shattered the kiddush Hashem that might have been. Indeed, as we are taught by Chazal, Gechazi was a man who had in other ways damaged the reputation of his master and undermined Elisha's influence. Shall we then cry for Gechazi? Is he not, after all, one of the few whose names are singled out in the Mishna Sanhedrin as not having a share in the world to come? Is he not described by Chazal as being lascivious (Brochos 10b), as being sarcastic and cynical (Mechilta Rashb"y 17), as being vainglorious and jealous (Sanhedrin 100a, Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:2)? Did he not undermine his Rebbe at every turn? Divining Gechazi's perfidy, Elisha condemned Gechazi to a living death and pushes him and his descendents to the very fringes of existence.

Yet this rejection of Gechazi is deemed by Chazal to be too radical, too total. Thus, they taught (Sotah 47a): One must push away with the left hand only as one draws close with the right hand, not as Elisha did, who pushed Gechazi away with both hands. Apparently, Chazal felt that Gechazi, a great talmid chacham, was redeemable.

Can a perfidious cynic be reclaimed? Can a man who has so undermined his own rebbe, the great prophet of Israel, be inspired to teshuvah? It is difficult, truly, to imagine a less likely candidate for redemption. And yet in the eyes of Chazal, the great Elisha had failed Gechazi, in a sense. The great and compassionate Elisha becomes an example of what a master and teacher must not do, as the Talmud (ibid.) adds: "Not like Elisha who pushed Gechazi away with both hands."

The son called a Rasha in the Haggadah of Pesach sits at

the table with all the others. He comes home for the Seder. This is no small thing, especially if we look at him with the insight of the Gaon of Vilna. According to the Gr"a z"l, the text of the Haggadah implies that we never address the Rasha directly. After stressing the girso of the Haggadah which says: "Li Velo Lo, Ilu haya sham lo haya nigal," (using the third person pronoun), the Gr"a argues: Should not the second person pronoun "lecha" have been used? If the father is speaking to the Rasha who sits at the Seder table in front of us, should he not say: "If you were in Egypt you would not have been redeemed?" Should not the Rasha been spoken to with the words: "velo lecha...haya sham" rather than "velo lo...haya sham?"

Furthermore, continues the Gra's argument, are not these words that we quote to the Rasha (from the posuk: Ba'avur zeh...) the very words that we say to the youngest child who cannot even ask? Why do we use that same posuk to instruct the Rasha if it is not the posuk addressed to the Rasha? Thus, proves the Gr"a, we see that the Haggadah wishes that we do not address the Rasha at all. Indeed, by means of our oblique reference to the Rasha we teach the little ones how to deal with the Rasha. We instruct those who cannot yet even ask their own questions that there is an ultimate truth which is absolute, which is Divine, which cannot and must not be challenged. We speak not to the Rasha but about him. We speak in the harshest of terms as we explain to the littlest children why such a Rasha would not have made it out of Egypt. The Rasha at the table learns and is given his opportunity to do teshuvah by being snubbed and rejected!

When is rejection merely rejection and when is it education? If the father, in anger and righteous indignation, would have thrown the Rasha out of his house forever, if he would have barred him from entering his home that Seder night, in the first place, that would have been rejection with "both hands."

Rejection as education, on the other hand, draws the Rasha into the home and towards the Seder table. By the father's refusal to respond to the Rasha's challenging and offensive diatribe, the Rasha learns that his questions are not quest and that his demeanor is "attitude." The Rasha learns that he does not deserve an answer because he cannot yet hear an answer. It is as Rav Chaim Volozhiner once remarked: "To questions you can give answers, to answers you cannot give answers."

This then is the key. The Rasha can be drawn near with the right hand, even the Rasha of the Haggadah, as long as he does not infect the other children with his venomous

musings. Thus even as he keeps the Rasha at his table, the responsible, ever-sensitive father, inoculates his family to the youngest with the understanding of what this Rasha is. Without that inoculation, the Rasha will learn nothing and the others will be "at risk."

The Rambam teaches us at the very beginning of the fourth perek of Hilchos Talmud Torah that it is forbidden to teach Torah to an unworthy student. This is based on the gemara in Chulin 133a which declares in the name of Rav that he who teaches an unworthy talmid falls into gehinnom, and further that it is akin to the idol worship of Markolis.

We would assume that we may simply bar the door of the yeshiva and send this fellow on his way, perhaps never to hear from him again. After all, he is unworthy. But let us take a closer look at the words of the Rambam: One cannot teach Torah unless he is a talmid who is hagun (correct, worthy, appropriate) in his actions or (at least) a simple fellow. But if he (the erstwhile talmid) goes in improper ways, (first) he is brought back to righteousness and is led on the straight path. After that the talmid is brought into the bais medrash and he is taught Torah.

The implication of the Rambam's words is hauntingly evident. We are asked to embrace every talmid who knocks on the door - even a talmid who cannot be allowed to enter the bais medrash. The talmid she'eno hagun must be engaged in a process of repair and then returned, wholesome and ready, to the bais medrash from which he had been barred. How does the process even begin? It begins when someone knocks on the Rebbe's door and says: I want to learn Torah from you. Yes, the rebbe must respond, "I cannot take you yet, but I am ready, if you are, to help change you and improve your middos and your hashkofos. Then I will admit you with all my heart." The unworthy talmid must at first be refused entry, but this temporary refusal is never a rejection. It is merely the beginning of the ultimate, perfect embrace.

Gechazi, even as he was wasting away in his leprous condition abandoned the ways of his Rebbe altogether and attached a Shem Hameforash to the idol of Yeravam, which proceeded to declare the first two of the aseres hadibros as if G-d were speaking. Even so, Gechazi was in the end visited by Elisha who begged him to do teshuvah. Gechazi refused. It was too late. The complete rejection of Gechazi after the Naaman affair led Gechazi to a monstrous denial of Hashem and caused him to lead many other Jews astray.

Who knows what would have happened if the Rasha in the Haggadah had been thrown out of the house for his insults and his kefirah? Would he ever come back? Instead, might he

not remain away and do irrevocable damage to himself and to all those whom he met in his “exile” from home and hearth?

Who knows what would happen if the potential talmid, eager to know but not yet ready to learn, would be rejected outright? Who knows what kind of failed and ignorant Jew he might be? Who knows if, in his despair of ever being accepted, he might not turn traitor to the very religion he sought to discover?

On the other hand, sheer love and acceptance can never work. Not for a Gechazi, not for the Haggadah’s Rasha,

and not for the talmid who is not yet worthy. Indeed it is forbidden to teach the talmid she’eno hogun. Whatever he learns he will corrupt and with that tainted knowledge he will then go and teach and corrupt others. But once the talmid comes to the door of the rebbe and says teach me, he becomes the child that cannot be thrown away. So the responsibility devolves upon the rebbe to first make this seeker a talmid hogun and then to embrace him completely and teach him Torah.

## The Value of Wealth

*Rabbi Ephraim Meth*

**T**zora’as is a form of ritual impurity (tumah), which results from a nega (affliction) that is inspected by a kohen and subsequently pronounced impure. If the kohen’s inspection and pronouncement are lacking, the nega alone cannot cause ritual impurity. These absolute requirements allow us to delay the onset of tumah in certain situations. For example, the kohen is not supposed to inspect afflictions on holidays, nor should he inspect a groom in the week following his wedding (Moed Kattan 7b-8a).

The kohen should similarly withhold his inspection of afflicted houses until their furniture has been removed. Ordinarily, anything inside of an afflicted house becomes tamei. Once tamei, utensils of metal and wood must be immersed in a mikvah, and pottery utensils must be destroyed. Therefore, the injunction on the kohen affords the homeowner an opportunity to save both effort and assets.

The Medrash (Toras Kohanim 5:12) derives from the above law that “the Torah had mercy on Jewish assets.” In a similar vein, the Medrash (Shemos Rabbah 11:3) points out that Hashem warned the Egyptians of the impending plague of hail so that they could rescue their livestock. Based on this, the Medrash concludes that Hashem also has mercy on non-Jewish assets. The rescue of Jewish assets even possesses halachic valence; certain leniencies are utilized only in situations of “hefsed merubah,” potentially major financial loss.

This theological value of wealth can be viewed in a purely practical light. Without wealth, our lives would be very difficult, and this being the case, our service of Hashem might suffer. Therefore, wealth is important because it

enables us to better serve Hashem. Rambam (Peirush haMishnayos, Sanhedrin ch. 10) articulates this approach, explaining that “man cannot perform mitzvos when he is sick, starving, thirsty, embattled, or besieged. Therefore, He guaranteed that these afflictions will remove themselves, that man will be healthy and at peace, so that he may complete his knowledge of Hashem and merit the world to come.”

An alternate approach argues that wealth is a prerequisite for performing certain mitzvos. If Jews are wealthy, they can give more charity and support more Torah institutions. Moreover, Jewish wealth generates greater honor for Hashem in the world—the Beis haMikdash must be glorious and imposing because it helps support Hashem’s honor. Unfortunately, this approach does not jibe with the Talmud’s statement that the vessels of the Beis ha-Mikdash (klei shareis) are manufactured from relatively inexpensive metals because the Torah had mercy on Jewish assets (Yoma 39a). If Jewish wealth is only valuable for its contribution to divine honor, it should surely be accepted for forming the klei shareis.

However, the Medrash may not have meant to address the intrinsic value of Jewish wealth. Rather, it intended to teach a moral lesson about concern for others’ property. Consider that the Torah demands us to spend one third of out assets on mitzvos aseh (positive commandments), and to forfeit our entire estate before transgressing a negative commandment (see Bava Kamma 9b). This cannot be classified as ‘mercy on Jewish wealth.’ The Torah records how Hashem spared the Egyptians’ cattle and the pottery of a metzorah to teach us not to treat the money of others lightly.

# Purifying the Metzora through Dikduk

*Rabbi Zvi Shiloni*

**T**he parashot of Tazria and Metzora are notorious for necessitating digging beneath the surface to uncover deeper meaning in the pesukim. Here's a beautiful example:

In Vayikra 14:11 the Torah describes the eighth day of the purification process for a metzora. He brings his offerings, and: "The kohen who is purifying (hametaher) stands the person who comes to be purified (hamitaher) and his sacrifices in front of Hashem."

A careful study of dikduk will uncover that the word hamitaher has two dageshim, in the letter mem and in the letter tet, while the word hametaher has none, even though the spellings of the two words are identical. The grammatical reasons for this are as follows:

The word hamitaher is written in hitpael, denoting that someone is doing an action to himself. Like the words mitlabesh or mitpashet, it really requires a letter tav before the tet and should be spelled and pronounced hamit-taher. The dagesh in the tet comes to replace that tav, signaling that the tet should be read with strong emphasis, as if it were two letters, a tav and a tet. A dagesh appears in the letter mem as well because it follows a hei hayediah at the beginning of the word, and a hei hayediah generally dictates that the following

letter be read with extra emphasis.

The word hametaher also begins with a hei hayediah but the dagesh falls because of the shva under the mem and is replaced instead with a meteg under the hei to separate the hei from the rest of the word. The letter hei in the middle of the word hametaher also should carry a dagesh, being that it is the middle letter of the verb in the piel form. Like the words melamed and mevorach which have a dagesh in the mem and reish, the word metaher should have a dagesh in the hei, but that dagesh does not appear because the letter hei, being an ot gronit (guttural) coming from the throat, cannot be overly emphasized.

If you've been patient enough to follow this far, you deserve a treat. Here comes: My father Shlit"a (whom I love to quote in these bulletins), pointed out something beautiful. While the word hametaher refers to the kohen who is officiating the service for the metzora, the word hamitaher refers to the metzora himself. The kohen is merely performing an external act as part of his function in the mishkan. The real, internal work, is the job of the metzora himself, who must do teshuva in order to achieve complete purification. The emphasis, the dagesh, is on him!

## Gold in the Medina

*Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn*

**A**t the onset of each month of Iyaar it becomes exceedingly more difficult to celebrate Yom Haatzmaut and exceptionally easier to find reason for sadness on Yom Hazikaron. To recount the murder and atrocities of the last few years is as Joseph Conrad writes in his Heart of Darkness "It would have been too dark -- too dark altogether." But as the Jewish People are a stiff necked people, we look for reasons to smile, reasons to celebrate Yom Haatzmaut a split second after Yom Hazikaron.

This past week, the Torah spoke of 3 zones affected by tzaraas: the body, the clothing, and the house. Why would tzaraas affect the house? The Torah cautions that there may be a situation where our bodies are clean, our clothing have no trace of this disease but for whatever reason,

G-d chose to afflict our dwelling place. Why? Rashi explains that this is a way for the Jewish people to get to the

gold that was hidden by the Amoraim (those that were in the land before us) in the walls of the house.

This is a strange teaching; isn't there another way for Hashem to tell the Jews about the gold? Furthermore, these afflictions are on account of sin, so why should they be rewarded with gold behind their walls?

R. Yechiel Michel Epstein, in his classic Halachic work Aruch HaShulchan, writes that the pain, in this instance, the punishment of negaim upon the house, isn't there for the sake of the affliction itself. There's no such thing as punishment for punishments sake. The ultimate function is to make us stronger and to help us arrive at a path in which we can receive G-d's abundance.

As much trouble and travail that the people of the State of Israel constantly go through – we must always realize, there is gold in the medinah (the State).



# Tzora'as- Hashem's Message of Ahavah for Am Yisroel

Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

In Parshas Metzora, we read of the laws of Tzora'as. If a person develops a growth on one's skin, there's a halachic process that a person goes through. The Kohen plays the major role in the process. The Kohen declares whether the person is Tahor or Tamei.

We find one very striking halacha regarding the importance of the role of the Kohen. The halacha is that there is a requirement that the Kohen makes the formal declaration that the person has Tzora'as. Even if the Kohen is not learned and he does not know the laws of Tzora'as, the Kohen still has to make the formal declaration (Negaim 3,1). In other words, let us say one thinks he has Tzora'as, and he goes to the Kohen, and the Kohen says "I don't know the halachos fully." So they go to the leading talmid chochom in the city, and this talmid chochom says "Yes, I think this is Tzora'as". The halacha is that the talmid chochom says to the Kohen "I think it is Tzora'as", and then the Kohen says to the Metzora "Yes, it is Tzora'as". The Kohen has to make the formal declaration. The Metzora has to hear from the Kohen that he has Tzora'as.

Why? Why this requirement that the declaration has to come from the Kohen? I once heard a beautiful explanation from R' Chaim Malinowitz shli"ta. He explained as follows: When a person gives tochachah, rebuke, it is important that the one giving rebuke makes it clear that he has the best interest of the other person in mind. He is giving rebuke in order to help the other person, to help him come back to the right path of Avodas Hashem. If one gives proper tochachah, then the goal is that the listener would say "Thank you very much." This is the Torah's approach to tochachah.

Chazal say (Arachin 15) that Tzora'as is a form of tochachah from Hashem. A person speaks loшон hara or does some other Aveirah, and Hashem sends Tzora'as as

a wake up call to remind him to change, to do teshuvah. Based on this, Rav Malinowitz explained that Hashem wanted to use Tzora'as as the paradigm of how to give tochachah. Hashem is going to teach us how to give tochachah through the laws of Tzora'as, where Hashem Himself is giving tochachah. And therefore the declaration that one is a Metzora must come from a Kohen. Why? Because the Kohen is the symbol of Hashem's love of Am Yisrael. Every day the Kohanim bless Bnei Yisrael. The Kohanim are the conduit through which Hashem blesses Am Yisrael, and the bracha which the Kohanim say is "Hamevarech es amo yisrael B'ahava". Hashem blesses Bnei Yisroel with love through the Kohanim. So the Kohanim symbolize Hashem's love of Bnei Yisrael.

When a Jew sees a Kohen, he is supposed to say to himself "Ah! Hashem loves me. Kohanim bring me blessings from Hashem." Therefore, when Hashem is giving rebuke, when Hashem is giving one Tzora'as, the declaration has to come from a Kohen. The person has to realize that this rebuke is coming out of love from Hashem. He wants to help us; He wants to help us change. Therefore, even if a Kohen is not learned, and does not know the halachos himself, the declaration still comes from a Kohen. Hashem is teaching us that His rebuke comes out of love.

This is an important message for us. First, we have to constantly remind ourselves that Hashem loves us. The Parshiyos of Tzora'as are an appropriate time to think about Hashem's love of Am Yisroel. Second, when we want to give rebuke to others, we have to work on making it clear that we have the other person's best interest in mind, and we are trying to help; we're giving the rebuke out of our love and concern for the other person. Who teaches us this idea? Rav Malinowitz explained that from the laws of Tzora'as, we see that Hashem Himself is teaching us this idea.

## Medical Confidentiality

Rabbi Michael Taubes

After describing the laws relating to tzora'at, the Torah concludes with the general statement "zot haTorah...", "this is the law...", concerning an

individual, a garment, and a house which contracted tzora'at, and then again, after introducing a requirement "lehorot," "to rule" on these matters, the Torah states

“zot Torat hatzora’at,” “this is the law of tzora’at” (Vayikra 14:54-57). The Gemara in Chagigah (11a) quotes a comment that there are few sources in the Scriptural text for the laws of nega’im, the term used in the Mishnah for the various afflictions associated with tzora’at, but then immediately challenges this assertion by referring to the many laws which are in fact found in this parashah and the one preceding it, summarized by the aforementioned pesukim. The Gemara then clarifies that actually there are many textual sources regarding tzora’at but not that many laws, as distinct from other areas of halachah where we find many laws with very few Scriptural sources. If, therefore, one is in doubt about a matter relating to nega’im, one should consult the text and find the applicable pesukim. It is documented throughout the preceding parashah that the kohen is the one assigned to determine whether or not a particular affliction is indeed to be classified as tzora’at (see, for example, Vayikra 13:2-3 and Rambam, Hilchot Tum’at Tzora’at 9:2); the Netziv, commenting on a pasuk later in the Torah which also discusses tzora’at (Ha’amek Davar to Devarim 24:8, s.v. ka’asher tzivtim), explains that it is the role of every kohen who examines a case of tzora’at to come to a decision by applying the relevant pesukim to the situation and to subsequently show other kohanim the affliction in question so that they too will know how to rule should a similar case come before them.

The Torat Kohanim on our parashah (Perek 5 No.16), explaining the word “lehorot,” “to rule,” cited above, teaches that one should not examine nega’im until he has been properly taught by a qualified teacher. The Torah Temimah (to Vayikra 14:57, No. 170) suggests the possibility based on this that in this particular area of halachah, one should not rely on what one has studied on one’s own, but must rather be taught and certified by a teacher. In his commentary on the Torat Kohanim, the Ra’avad there (s.v. lehorot) describes the procedure to be followed when a teacher instructs his student about examining nega’im, and he then notes that the same idea is found in the Yerushalmi in Chagigah (2:1, 8b-9a in Vilna edition) which states that one may not express any opinion in the area of nega’im unless he has had the proper training. It must be stressed that the text in our standard editions of the Yerushalmi there does not say this, but this was the version which the Ra’avad had and the Chafetz Chaim, in his commentary to the Torat Kohanim there (s.v. ad sheyorenu rabbo), cites the Ra’avad’s position even without the support of that Yerushalmi, and so does the

Netziv quoted above when he asserts that a kohen who must rule on the status of a particular affliction should show other kohanim that affliction so that they too may learn the halachah. In commenting on our parashah, the Netziv (Ha’amek Davar to Vayikra 14:55, s.v. lehorot) writes similarly that one must be specially trained in order to examine nega’im and that a kohen who sees an affliction should summon his students to have a look so that they too will know how to rule in such a situation.

The Netziv then adds, however, based on the Torah’s presentation of the phrase “zot Torat,” “this is the law of...,” after already stating “zot haTorah,” “this is the law,” that this permission to show others the affliction that one is examining is limited to the case of tzora’at. Otherwise, it is improper for someone, a physician, for example, to invite others to examine a patient for whom he is caring because it can be embarrassing for a person to have medical students and others gather around and look at various things on his body. In general, of course, it is prohibited to violate someone else’s privacy and to go around telling others about what one knows or has seen concerning that person, as the Torah states that one may not be a tale-bearer or a gossip-monger (Vayikra 19:16; see Rashi there s.v. lo teilech rachil). Moreover, based on a passuk earlier in the Torah (Vayikra 1:1), the Gemara in Yoma (4b) teaches that when one is told something by somebody else he may not share that information with anyone else unless given specific direction to do so (see Rashi there s.v. shehu and Maharsha there in his Chidushei Agadot, s.v. shehu, for explanations as to exactly how this teaching is derived from the passuk; see also Ohr HaChaim to Shemot 25:2, s.v. daber). The Rambam (Hilchot De’ot 7:1-6) documents the severity of the sin of publicizing private information about others, even if the information is true.

This same prohibition is in force regarding the sharing of private information which one has come across through his professional work. The Gemara in Sanhedrin (31a) states, citing this same passuk which forbids acting as a tale-bearer or a gossip-monger, as well as a related passuk in Mishlei (11:13), that a judge may not reveal to a litigant the details of the deliberations between himself and the other judges, and then relates a story about someone who shared some private facts which he had picked up about somebody else in the Beit Midrash, and Rav Ami removed him from the Beit Midrash some twenty-two years later, condemning him as one who reveals secrets. The Etz Yosef on the Ein Yaakov there (s.v. ve’itmar) notes that this was

despite the fact that one could have argued that in as much as this information emerged from the Beit Midrash, it was undoubtedly known by others. Based on this Gemara, the Semag (Mitzvat Lo Ta'aseh 9), who notes that it is not for no reason that the prohibition against acting as a tale-bearer or a gossip-monger is juxtaposed in the Torah to the prohibition against standing by idly while someone else's blood is shed, defines such a person as one who reveals to someone what others have said about him in private; the Rambam (Hilchot Sanhedrin 22:7) rules in accordance with this Gemara and cites the story as well.

In light of the above, it seems clear that a doctor who has private medical information about a patient may not share that with anybody else, even, as the aforementioned Netziv in our parashah asserts, with his students. It would appear, however, that there are exceptions to this rule. The Gemara in Avodah Zarah (28a), for example, relates that when Rabbi Yochanan developed some kind of disease and learned how to treat it, he shared the treatment with everybody else even though the medical expert who had taught it to him did not want him to do so. Clearly, Rabbi Yochanan did this because he maintained that he would be helping others who might get this disease. One might thus reasonably conclude that if a physician, by sharing medical information about a patient, will help other doctors be able to more effectively cure their patients, it would be permissible for him to do so. Along similar lines, the Chafetz Chaim (Hilchot Issurei Rechilut 9:1-2) teaches that one may share private business information with someone else in order to save him from undertaking a venture which will be to his detriment, but he stresses that even then, certain guidelines must be followed, including having clear first-hand knowledge, examining all the relevant facts, not exaggerating the facts, having in mind only the positive benefit to this person, and attempting other means of influencing him without sharing any negative information. The Rambam (Hilchot Rotzei'ach 1:14) and the Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 426:1) rule that if one has information about something which can potentially harm another person and he does not share with him what he knows, he is guilty of standing by idly while that person's blood is shed. Clearly, then, there are times when one must indeed share certain information.

Considering all of the above, a number of Poskim discuss the question of when exactly it is appropriate to publicize the information he is aware of and when it is not. Rav Yaakov Breisch of Switzerland (Shu"t Chelkat

Yaakov, Evven HaEzer No. 69), for example, was asked by an observant doctor whether to share his knowledge about a young man who, unbeknownst to him and his family, had a serious medical condition which would take his life in a short period of time with his bride to be, who most likely would not marry him under those circumstances. He rules that even if the doctor was not asked, he should volunteer this information; even though it is confidential and sharing it will cause harm to the groom, the loss to the bride in terms of what would happen to her life is greater and the case is similar to that discussed in the aforementioned rulings of Rambam, the Shulchan Aruch and the Chafetz Chaim. Rav Ovadyah Yosef (Shu"t Yechaveh Da'at 4:60) discusses a question posed by an eye doctor who was aware that a person has a certain visual impairment that cannot be detected in an ordinary eye examination and wanted to know whether he had to inform the bureau of motor vehicles to whom this person was applying for a driver's license; he rules that because this person's condition could flare up while he is driving in which case he would be endangering both himself and others, the doctor must certainly share his information.

Finally, Rav Eliezer Yehudah Waldenberg, formerly the halachic authority at Shaare Zedek Hospital in Yerushalayim, writes in one teshuvah (Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer 16:4) that a doctor must share his knowledge of a certain medical problem which a woman has with her husband to be, but he adds that it would be better to set things up such that the woman herself shares the information, if possible. In another teshuvah (Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer 13:81), he discusses whether a doctor may testify in court about a patient's medical condition or whether that violates the oath he took as a doctor not to reveal patient information; he rules that that oath does not have halachic validity if there is potential danger to others, because the Torah requires one to do what he can to save a life. Subsequently in that teshuvah, he discusses the question of allowing students to see and evaluate a patient even where there is no benefit to the patient, but just to the education of the students; citing the position of the Netziv presented above that only in a case of tzora'at may the expert teach others by showing them the affliction. Otherwise, though, it is not allowed unless the patient has granted consent because the patient is entitled to his privacy. Each case of this type that comes up must be considered independently by a qualified rabbinic authority.

# Korbonos of the Metzora

Rabbi Avraham Gordimer

**T**he first section of Parshas Metzora details the tahara (purification regimen) of the Metzora. Among the many unusual features of this tahara are the eight-day length of the entire regimen, culminating with an elaborate sacrificial service which includes the sprinkling of oil toward the Kodesh Ha-Kodoshim seven times, the application of blood from the Metzora's Korban Asham (Guilt Offering) and oil on the Metzora's right ear, right thumb and large right toe, and the subsequent placing of oil on the Metzora's head. All of this is performed by a Kohen.

These procedures, as unusual as they may be, are not unique to a Metzora. We find that the Yom Kippur Avodah (Service) also features sprinkling (of blood) seven times by a Kohen toward the Kodesh Ha-Kodoshim. Additionally, the Miluim (Inauguration) of the Kohanim in Parshas Tzav is strikingly similar to the tahara of a Metzora, for the Miluim likewise consisted of a seven-day process which culminated on the eighth day, and its procedures involved the application of blood from a korban to the right ear, right thumb and large right toe of each Kohen, and the subsequent application of oil to the Kohanim.

It is difficult to ignore the above striking similarities. Is there a connection between the tahara of a Metzora and the Avodas Yom Ha-Kippurim and the Miluim?

The Miluim as well as the Yom Kippur Avodah represent entry to God's sanctum. The Miluim served as the conditioning and sanctification of the Kohanim to perform Avodah, raising them to the requisite level and endowing upon them the special status necessary to be stationed in the Mishkan/Mikdash to approach Hashem and perform His Service. The Miluim were an induction into kedusha (holiness) and granted the Kohanim license to enter the Kodesh for Avodah and perform it. Avodas Yom Ha-Kippurim shares this motif from a different perspective, representing Man drawing extremely close to God and entering the most holy locus on earth to stand before the Shechinah and become purified.

With this in mind, let's return to the Metzora. After living outside the city in complete isolation for a long period, barred from interaction with society, the Metzora finally

undergoes tahara and can rejoin the community. One would expect this to be an occasion of massive relief for the Metzora, as his discomfort and isolation are finally over; the Metzora is like one being freed from forced exile, liberated at last.

However, in truth, this picture of the Metzora's liberation is totally inaccurate. The reality is that a Metzora's return to society, his city and home, as enabled by the tahara process, reflect the Metzora's teshuva - his sincere repentance and personality change from that of an offender to that of a humbled individual who heeds the Will of Hashem and has purged himself of the negative characteristics which brought Tzora'as on him in the first place. A purified Metzora is not simply freed from the yoke of isolation and allowed to return to his old self. On the contrary, a purified Metzora enters a new covenant with Hashem and enters a society which he now knows must be treated from a perspective of holiness and submission to God's mandate. The Metzora's return to the community, marked by his tahara, are a dedication and elevation of the Metzora to be a person of God and to truly reflect His image by his new personality and reformed ways. The society from which the Metzora was banned must be to him like a Mishkan and Mikdash which he is finally privileged to enter, with the understanding that he will comport himself therein with utmost respect and deference. Just as the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur enters the Kodesh Ha-Kodoshim in awe to effect expiation for the people, and just as the Kohanim upon the occasion of the Miluim were dedicated and elevated to enter the Mishkan as Kohanim with the merit to draw near to Hashem via the Avodah, the Metzora who undergoes tahara must view his personal purification and re-entry to society as one who is redeemed and privileged to enter a holy congregation, where he will be a new person and treat his surroundings with reverence and submission to God's Will. The purified Metzora is not returning to his old community as an emancipated exile; rather, he is entering God's national sanctum, where his daily life must be a holy Avodah. This is the special comparison of the Metzora's tahara with Yom Kippur and the Miluim.