

In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel and the fallen soldiers of the IDF. Praying for the safe return of all the hostages.

13 APRIL 2024 | 5 NISAN 5784

VOLUME 37 | #32

# DAF HAS YUVA

תַּזְרִיָּא | TAZRIA

## SHABBAT ENDS:

London 8.43pm  
 Birmingham 8.53pm  
 Cardiff 9.00pm  
 Dublin 9.13pm  
 Edinburgh 9.13pm  
 Glasgow 9.17pm  
 Hull 8.57pm  
 Leeds 8.58pm  
 Liverpool 9.03pm  
 Manchester 9.00pm  
 Nottingham 8.57pm  
 Sheffield 9.00pm  
 Southend 8.39pm  
 Southport 9.07pm  
 Jerusalem 7.45pm



# Sidra Summary

תַּזְרִיעַ  
TAZRIA

4th Sidra in:

וַיִּקְרָא  
VAYIKRA

By Numbers:

**67 VERSES**  
**1,010 WORDS**  
**3,667 LETTERS**

Headlines:

**LAWS OF  
"TZARA'AT"  
AND SPIRITUAL  
MALADY**

**TAZRIA:**

Artscroll p608  
Hertz p460  
Soncino p674

**HAFTARAH:**

Artscroll p1170  
Hertz p685  
Soncino p466

**1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – VAYIKRA 12:1-13:5**

After childbirth, a woman would wait several weeks before bringing an elevation offering (*olah*) and a sin offering (*chatat*). A baby boy is circumcised on the eighth day after birth, even if that falls on a Shabbat (Talmud Shabbat 132a).

God told Moshe and Aharon that someone whose skin appeared to indicate a particular type of skin disease (*tzara'at*) would have to show the blemish to a Kohen. The Kohen would evaluate and decide if the affliction was clearly *tzara'at*, thus rendering the person impure (*tameh*). If the case was unclear, the Kohen would quarantine the person for seven days.

**2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 13:6-17**

After the first period of quarantine, the Kohen would re-inspect the blemish. Sometimes a second seven-day period was necessary. Eventually the Kohen would declare whether the person was *tameh* or *tahor* (pure).

**3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 13:18-23**

Even if a wound looked like *tzara'at*, it could not be judged as such until after it was fully healed and the normal inspection procedure by the Kohen had been carried out.

**4TH ALIYA (REVI' I) – 13:24-28**

It was also possible for *tzara'at* to develop from a burn. However, a burn and a blemish that were adjacent to one another could not combine together to form the minimum size needed to render an affliction as *tzara'at* (Rashi).

**5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 13:29-39**

*Tzara'at* could erupt on the scalp or on the beard area, causing a loss of hair. The signs of affliction were two golden hairs appearing after the onset of baldness (Rashi).

**6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 13:40-54**

A slightly different form of *tzara'at* is detailed, which caused a more substantial loss of hair. A *metzora* (one who has been contaminated with *tzara'at*) was sent outside of the camp and had to tear their garments.

**7TH ALIYA (SHEVI' I) – 13:55-59**

*Tzara'at* could also infect clothing. A suspected garment was set apart before the Kohen made a ruling about whether it was *tameh*. If it was declared *tameh*, the garment was burnt.

**Point to Consider:** *Why are items of clothing (and indeed people themselves) no longer affected by tzara'at? (see Ramban's commentary to 13:47)*

**HAFTARAH (II KINGS 4:42-5:19)**

Today's haftarah contains the story of the mighty Aramean general Na'aman, who was afflicted with *tzara'at*. An Israelite woman, taken captive and working for Na'aman, advised him to seek a cure for his *tzara'at* from the prophet Elisha, who told him to bathe seven times in the River Jordan. Na'aman was insulted at the suggestion ("we have much greater rivers", he said), but his servants persuaded him to do so, and he was cured. Na'aman understood that God was communicating with him, with the affliction and its cure.



**United Synagogue Daf Hashavua**

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# Appreciating the Ebb and Flow of Life



**RABBI  
JASON  
KLEIMAN**

Beth Hamidrash  
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Parashat Tazria begins with addressing the status of a woman who has just given birth. In the aftermath of bringing new life into the world, the mother has the halachic status of being called *"tamei'ah"*, which is often unfortunately translated variously as "impure", "unclean" or even worse, "contaminated". It is true that the state of being *tamei* is hard to translate into English but what is concerning are the connotations associated with such translations, as if to suggest the new mother is somehow tainted and not worthy of setting foot in the holy environment of the Temple.

Moreover, the *tamei* status of the new mother is expressed alongside and in the same terms as when a woman has the most natural situation occur with her monthly cycle, requiring her to separate from any intimacy with her husband. How can this be explained?

The answer is that Judaism

is fundamentally focused on life and often requires us to perform acts that distinguish between an intimation of mortality and a celebration of the living. Death is the ultimate block to life, so being *tamei* is better translated as being in a limited state of halachic blockage.

There are applications of transforming ourselves from being *tamei* with which we are all too familiar, such as when we wash our hands with a vessel upon leaving the cemetery and after waking up in a morning. In both biblical and popular literature, sleep is a metaphor for death, so morning handwashing signifies a demarcation from a temporary taste of death to life, just as washing hands after being in temporary proximity to the departed at the cemetery marks the transformation back into the world of the living. However, at a much more intense psychological and physical level, the contrast between bearing and no longer nurturing life is reflected in the ebb and flow that women experience because of the life-bearing miracle that is the female body.

When a woman is pregnant, she does not experience her

usual monthly cycle because the blood vessels are helping the development of the fetus and are engaged in the process and sanctity of life. When the woman gives birth, this comes to an end as the sanctity of new life leaves her body, and a vacuum is created.

When she is not pregnant and experiences her monthly cycle, potential life passes through the woman's body leaving her with a sense of imbalance and loss that requires sensitivity from her husband in a non-physical way. Judaism respects both these realities and mandates the necessary space, time and privacy a woman needs in response to spiritually and emotionally potent life experiences.

Times of being *tamei* are natural and part of the circle of life. We need not fear them but recognise the cycle that occurs for each person. So too in our relationship with God, we have times when we are closer and times when we feel further apart, detached and less connected. This need not frighten us, but we must be conscious of this ebb and flow in our relationship with Him, to embrace the times of proximity that give us strength to overcome the times of distance and



# Where was Golah?

Tannaim and their Cities: Part 34 | Rabbi Yehoshua / Rabbi Chananya

*This series of articles takes a closer look at the Tannaim (Sages of the Mishnaic era) mentioned in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 32b) and the locations which served as their Torah centres.*



**DAVID  
FREI**

US Director of External  
and Legal Services and  
Registrar of the London  
Beth Din

The 2nd Century Sage, Rabbi Chananya, nephew of Rabbi Yehoshua, spent most of his rabbinic career in Babylonia. Despite the approbation given to his yeshiva, no mention is made in the Mishna of his halachic teachings.

We are told that Rabbi Chananya's yeshiva was in the Golah, a term generally meaning "the Diaspora" and, in this case, meaning Babylonia. But where in Babylonia was his yeshiva?

Rashi (1040-1105) in his commentary on *Sanhedrin 32b* and Rabbi Sherira Gaon (c.906-c.1006) in his history of Babylonian Jewry, both identify Golah as Pumbedita, on the east bank of the Euphrates, on whose ruins the Iraqi city of Fallujah stands today. Pumbedita was an illustrious Torah centre (Rabbi Sherira Gaon himself lived there) between the 3rd and 11th centuries, at which time the yeshiva moved to Baghdad.

However, given no specific association in Talmudic literature between Rabbi Chananya and Pumbedita, why do Rashi and Rabbi Sherira Gaon identify his yeshiva in Golah as being in Pumbedita?

The answer lies in a Mishna in *Rosh Hashana 2:2* which describes how the Beth Din in Jerusalem would notify the Jews of Babylonia once they had declared the new month, on the basis of witnesses testifying they had seen the New Moon. They would light a bonfire on the Mount of Olives, which would be seen by observers on another mountain top, who in turn lit beacons, until a chain of such fires would convey the message to far-off Babylonia, where the person lighting his beacon at a particular spot would see the whole of 'Golah' lit up before him like a giant bonfire. The Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah 23b*) states that by 'Golah' the Mishna is referring to Pumbedita, and this is the source for Rashi and Rabbi Sherira Gaon's view that Rabbi Chananya's yeshiva was located there.

**The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 23b) states that by 'Golah' the Mishna is referring to Pumbedita, and this is the source for Rashi and Rabbi Sherira Gaon's view that Rabbi Chananya's yeshiva was located there.**

There is another opinion on the location of the yeshiva.

In the previous article, we mentioned how Rabbi Chananya thought that Jewish, religious life in Israel had become virtually impossible to maintain because of the Hadrianic suppression of Torah teaching and observance after the Bar Kochba Revolt. Rabbi Chananya therefore sought to establish an alternative religious centre in Babylonia.

This was fiercely opposed by the Sages of the Land of Israel who, after the death of Hadrian and an easing of restrictions, were attempting to rebuild Judaism from the new seat of the Sanhedrin, in Usha in the Galilee.

They sent a delegation of rabbis to Rabbi Chananya, one of whom mocked his efforts to ignore the authority of the Rabbinat in Israel by reciting aloud: "For from Babylon shall Torah go out and the Word of God from Nehar Pekod", a play on the verse from Yeshaya 2:3, "For from Zion shall Torah go out and the Word of God from Jerusalem" (*Talmud Yerushalmi Nedarim 6:8*).

This tells us that Rabbi Chananya's base in Babylonia was Nehar Pekod, a city situated between Sura and Nippur. There is evidence that this was, in later generations, a prominent Torah centre for many centuries, where a number of the Geonim who led the great yeshiva in Sura were born.

# Israel at the Seder



**RABBI  
GIDEON  
SYLVESTER**

US Israel Rabbi

Around the Seder table, we relate the story of our people's ancient past culminating in the exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Reed Sea and the revelation at Mount Sinai. While we immerse ourselves in that story, my teacher Rabbi Shlomo Riskin points out that it is not enough to dwell on the past,

we must focus on our future too. At the Seder, we do this. We open the door for Eliyahu (Elijah) and pour his cup of wine, reminding us of the prophet who will herald the coming of Mashiach. We sing *L'Shana Haba Birushalayim*, Next year in Jerusalem, and songs like *Chad Gadya* and *Adir Hu* relating to the ultimate destruction of evil and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

The exodus was a success. We made it to our land, and though we were exiled by the Babylonians, then by the Romans, we are back, with a Jewish state

in the Promised Land. This year, Israel has taken a bashing, and all of us have been shaken by the consequences. Yet, amidst the darkness, there is much to celebrate. Millions of Jews are fulfilling the vision of the prophets; raising families and living happy, successful, Jewish lives in Jerusalem and other Israeli cities.

So this year, as we sing *L'Shana Haba Birushalayim*, we can ask the people around our table about the words "Next year in Jerusalem". What does it mean to us? And what is our personal contribution to the Torah's vision of building of a model Jewish society in the Land of Israel?

# How to Make Seder Engaging for Everyone



**RABBI  
YOSSI  
FACHLER**

New West End  
Synagogue

Why do we have a Seder Night every year, with its lovely traditions, with family and friends, deliberating, discussing and singing? What is the source of this law?

It comes from the Torah, where God tells Moshe (Moses), "And you shall explain to your child on that day, 'It is because of what God did for me when I went free from Egypt'" (Shemot 13:14).

In its basic state, the fulfilment of this mitzvah has to include

educating the youth and others present, and keeping them occupied over the course of a long evening.

And that is why we are commanded to observe the Seder Night and to try and make it as engaging as possible. There needs to be a continuous flow of things happening: reading and translating, singing and explaining. Try to include short sketches that re-enact a chapter of our Exodus - e.g. any one of the ten plagues, the negotiations between Moshe and Pharaoh, the rush to bake matzah and get out of Egypt, anything!

Let your guests/family members know well in advance that this year you are inviting them to play a leading role in a genuine,



interactive Seder. They can choose between singing a favourite Haggadah tune, preparing an explanation of one of the sections or drawing up a quiz, or acting out one of the plagues. Anything works.

If we get this right, those sitting around the table will do the same for others in future years. That's a result!

# The Changes in Shlomo's Later Years

## Sefer Melachim (Kings) I: Chapter 9



**PNINA  
SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and  
US Educator

Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon) has now completed all his building projects. It has taken twenty years, but he now has a magnificent palace plus a splendid *Beit Hamikdash* (Temple) to honour God. It is at this point that God appears to Shlomo for the second time.

God reiterates His promise to uphold the kingship of the House of David and to rest His *Shechina*, Divine presence, in the *Beit Hamikdash*. However, this is only on the condition that Shlomo and his descendants serve God properly. It is not a one-sided deal; only if the Jewish people uphold their end will God honour His side of the bargain.

In fact, a very strange phrase appears. God states that if the Jewish people serve other gods,

then He will exile them and turn them into a "parable and a byword" (*I Melachim 9:7*). This rare phrase is used in only one other place in the *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible). In Parashat Ki Tavo, we hear the list of curses that will befall the Jewish people if we do not keep the Torah. There it states that God will turn us into a "parable and a byword" (*Devarim 28:37*).

This message is not new. We have been told repeatedly throughout the *Tanach* that the stability of the Davidic monarchy and Jewish presence in the Land of Israel is contingent upon our Torah observance. The repetition is crucial, to ensure the message is truly internalised. Just like a parent may need to remind their child ten times a day to put away their shoes or to tidy their room, so too God needs to remind us.

The second part of our chapter discusses the later part of Shlomo's reign. Shlomo gave twenty towns to Hiram, King of Tyre, in return

for Hiram's supply of wood and gold for the *Beit Hamikdash*. It seems that Hiram is not pleased with the quality of these towns and complains that they are in unsuitable areas of land (*I Melachim 9:12-13*).

Rabbi Alex Israel (Alon Shvut, Israel) points out that this is in contrast to the way the trade deal was carried out earlier on in Shlomo's reign. Previously, Shlomo repaid Hiram with large amounts of superfluous wheat and oil (*ibid.* 5:24-25). However, it appears that this surplus is no longer available; towns need to be given away instead. The nation is no longer made up primarily of hardworking farmers willing to engage in manual labour. Instead, Shlomo has allowed his people to develop a more affluent and comfortable lifestyle. National production is declining. *Chazal*, our Sages, say that the people became "wealthy and spoiled; they did not engage in manual labour"<sup>1</sup>.

When Shlomo began building the *Beit Hamikdash*, all of Israel were required to work on the building, or at least contribute to it financially (see *I Melachim, chapter 5*). However, now he has foreign workers doing the manual labour (*ibid.* 9:20-22). These developments could be linked to the changes in Shlomo's reign that we will see in the coming chapters.

**When Shlomo began building the *Beit Hamikdash*, all of Israel were required to work on the building, or at least contribute to it financially.**

<sup>1</sup> Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 54a. For more information see Alex Israel, *I Kings, Torn in Two*, pp.114-115.

# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT TAZRIA

12-13 APRIL | 5 NISAN

## Scattered Feathers



**MICHAL  
MANN**

Tribe Israel

In this week's parasha, Tazria, we learn about a person who suffers from *tzara'at* – a skin disease with a spiritual cause. The Torah tells us that when a person gets *tzara'at*, they need to leave the camp and can only come back after they are cleared by the Kohen (priest). It is not clear from the Torah why a person gets *tzara'at*, but our Rabbis teach us that one of the reasons is as a punishment for speaking *Lashon Hara*, any damaging statement against another person (Talmud Arachin 16a).

Now we know that *tzara'at* is a punishment for speaking *Lashon Hara*, we may wonder what the connection is between these two

things, how is one connected to the other?

The Rabbis of the Talmud asked: "What is unique about someone with *tzara'at* that the Torah states: 'They shall dwell alone; outside of the camp shall be their dwelling' (Vayikra 13:46)?" The answer is given: "By speaking evil speech they separated between husband and wife and between one person and another; therefore, they are punished with *tzara'at* and the Torah says, 'They shall dwell alone; outside of the camp shall be their dwelling.'" (Talmud Arachin 16b)

This indeed is a very harsh punishment, but nasty words can have a very harsh outcome and lead to terrible things.

There is a story of a man who came to Chacham Yosef Chaim of Baghdad (known as the Ben Ish Chai, 1839-1909) asking how he can do complete *teshuva* (making amends) for speaking *Lashon*

*Hara*. The Ben Ish Chai, instead of answering the question, asked him to go and bring him a feather pillow. Then, in front of the man, the Ben Ish Chai cut open the pillow and started scattering the feathers all over the place, with many feathers flying far away in the wind. The Ben Ish Chai then asked the man to collect and put back all the feathers. The man suddenly realised the frightening reality. Just as it is impossible to collect all the feathers, it can be extremely difficult to make up for the damage caused by speaking *Lashon Hara*, because negative words can fly and spread to a point where it is too late to take them back.

Whilst *tzara'at* does not exist anymore, we cannot forget that *Lashon Hara* is so damaging, as it is so difficult to fix what has already been said. Let's always remember to be careful with what we say, and only speak positively about others.

## Tazria Teaser

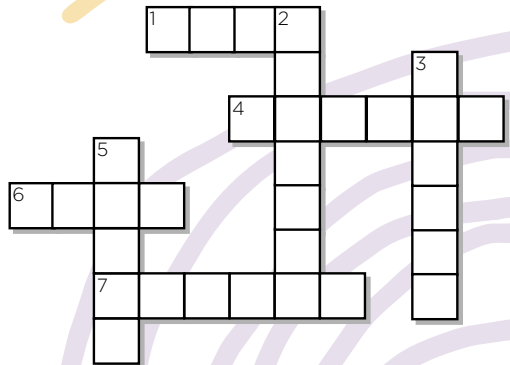
Can you solve the crossword clues below?

### Across

1. Circumcision is called \_\_\_\_ Milah
4. Name of the parasha
6. An affliction found in clothing of \_\_\_\_, linen or leather must be examined
7. A male child is circumcised on which day?

### Down

2. Disease which can appear on the skin, head, beard, clothing or house
3. An impure person immerses in a special body of water called a \_\_\_\_
5. The person you go to to confirm if you have *tzara'at*



### Answers

Down: 2. Tzara'at 3. Mikvah 5. Kohen  
Across: 1. Brit 4. Tazria 6. Wool 7. Eighth





# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

TAZRIA: PAUSE FOR CAUSE!

THIS WEEK'S PARASHA OF TAZRIA DISCUSSES THE LAWS OF LASHON HARA - NEGATIVE SPEECH.

LIKE THE TIME WE WERE REALLY ANNOYED WITH DR TSORIS FOR USING OUR PAINT. INSTEAD OF GETTING CROSS WITH HIM, WE DECIDED TO DO A MITZVAH AND LET HIM USE IT. MAYBE HE NEEDED TO SAVE HIS PAINT FOR URGENT REPAIRS?



ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO AVOID SPEAKING LASHON HARA IS BY JUDGING PEOPLE FAVOURABLY AND THINKING OF A GOOD REASON WHY THEY MIGHT BE BEHAVING THAT WAY. IF YOU CAN COME UP WITH A REASONABLE EXPLANATION, YOU ARE MUCH LESS LIKELY TO SPEAK BADLY ABOUT THEM.



DID YOU KNOW THAT WHEN YOU JUDGE SOMEONE FAVOURABLY YOU GET AN EXTRA BENEFIT? DR RANGAN CHATTERJEE HAS SPENT MANY YEARS STUDYING WHAT MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY. IN HIS BOOK AND LECTURES HE GIVES SEVERAL TIPS ON HOW TO LIVE A HAPPY LIFE.



TURNS OUT THE MITZVAH WAS DR TSORIS' AFTER ALL. WHEN HE LEFT, WE SAW THAT WE HAD BEEN USING HIS PAINT AND OURS WAS UNTOUCHED AFTER ALL.

DR CHATTERJEE'S NUMBER 1 TIP FOR HAPPINESS IS REFRAMING. FOR EXAMPLE, INSTEAD OF GETTING FRUSTRATED WITH THE CAR WHO CUTS YOU UP, YOU CAN IMAGINE THE DRIVER STRESSING ABOUT GETTING TO THEIR JOB ON TIME, OR MAYBE THEY'RE RUSHING TO HOSPITAL.

BY REFRAMING THE SITUATION, YOU ARE REDUCING YOUR BODY'S EMOTIONAL STRESS AND THAT MAKES YOU SIGNIFICANTLY HAPPIER.



NEXT TIME YOU FIND YOURSELF FACING A TRICKY TIME, HAVE A GO AT REFRAMING - YOU'LL BE HAPPY YOU TRIED!



WE HAVE A TERM FOR THAT - IT'S CALLED BEING DAN LECHAF ZECHUT - JUDGING A PERSON FAVOURABLY. WE LEARN IT FROM THE MISHNA, THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO!



Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldwiler Writer: Shira Chalk Cartoonist: Paul Solomon

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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.