

I hope that you have all had a brilliant Pesach! We will continue with Perek Gimmel of Messechet Shabbat; this week we will learn Mishna Bet.

Mishna Aleph, which we learnt before Pesach, talks about using a certain kind of oven on Shabbat (a *Kirah*). The oven was one which didn't contain the heat very well.

This Mishna continues with the oven theme but we now deal with some different kinds of ovens.

A *Tanur* oven may not be used to heat food or keep food hot from before Shabbat, even if the fuel was merely straw or stubble. The *Tanur* is shaped like an upside-down football-stadium and contains heat very well. Therefore, even the 'weak' fuels straw and stubble will gener-

ate enough heat to cause a problem.

A *Kupach* oven is sometimes allowed and sometimes not. It depends on what fuel is used. When heated with straw or stubble, one may use it to keep food hot. However, if the fuel used is 'marc' or wood, it may not be used. The reason for this is that, architecturally, a *Kupach* falls between a *Tanur* and a *Kirah*. It has straight sides (like a *Kirah*) but is small and can fit only one pot (like a *Tanur*).

Therefore, only with the right fuels will it reach sufficient temperatures.

Next week we will deal with cooking eggs on Shabbat! (By the way, it *isn't* permitted!)

'Parasha Digest – Tazria-Metzora

ראשון: The Halachot of humans becoming ritually impure (tamei) are discussed, including the process a mother who has just given birth needs to go through in order to become pure again (tahor). Included in this is the offering up of a Korban. Also, Tzaraat is introduced, including how the Kohen identifies it. The comparative severities of each symptom are discussed.

שני: Tsaraat of the head and face is mentioned, along with implications of this.

שלישי: The Halacha regarding Tsaraat on the head is further discussed, with baldness being a factor involved in the identification process. The isolation of someone who has Tsaraat is also related (he has to go and live outside the camp of Bnei Yisrael for a certain period of time) and the case of the Tsaraat spreading to clothes is mentioned.

רביעי: The stages of the purification of someone who is afflicted with Tsaraat (A Metzora) are re-

lated. A Metzora has to go from arrogance to humility and he has to resolve to change his ways. Then, on the seventh day of his isolation outside the camp, the Kohen shaves of all of the Metzora's hair. He then has to bring a Korban.

חמישי: The Korban of a Metzora who is poor is detailed.

ששי: The procedure of identification and purification when the Tsaraat is on a house is related in much detail. The Zav and Baal Keri (male impurities) are discussed and the purification process is detailed.

שביעי: The Torah mentions the female impurities of the Niddah and Zavah and the process of their purification is also discussed.



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How To Be Pure

We find that the purification for a Metzora is proud and demote other people.

A character building process, portraying how a man should know his place in the world by doing Hashem's will, and never thinking he has earned his right to live in this world hence be in anyway selfish towards any other people.

Rashi explains that the two birds (one of which is slaughtered and the other sent away after being dipped, with the other elements described, into the blood), which have a tendency to twitter to each other, represent the afflicted person's "twittering" (Lashon Hora) about other people. The wood from the tall and handsome cedar tree, represent his delusion of pride and superiority over others including the person whom he spoke of. So with these elements representing haughtiness, come other elements, simple and even menial: The lowly bundle of the hyssop bush always overshadowed by the trees in the forest, and the tongue of scarlet wool which, at closer inspection of the word "tolaas," also means "worm," a low-lying humble creature.

So by wrapping up these items altogether (and dipping into the blood of the slaughtered bird mixed with spring water in an earthenware vessel), we humble the person's self-deception of loftiness, thinking he had a right to feel

On Friday nights, we say, "Hashem moloch geus Lovesch" – Pride belongs to Hashem. Chazal explain that this statement is a Law that tells us we are not allowed be Haughty.

Hashem created the world and continues to make and create everything. Recognising this, how can anybody think they are amazing when Hashem puppeteers the world according to his will? By being haughty, we are emphasising that we are the sole cause of our actions and could be denying, chas vesholom, Hashem's absolute control over existence. Of course no one is perfect (at least not me) but to ponder and apply this fact could induce some sense into people to realise to what degree snobbery is bad and what it can cause.

I'd like to thank Rav Shlomo ben Yitchak for inspiring me to this interpretation that I got from his commentary.

Shabbat Shalom

By Shmuel Korn

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The Rooster Detective

Shmuel was a religious, G-d fearing Jew. He was a Torah scholar and was much admired and greatly respected by everyone. The squire of his village heard of Shmuel's wisdom and honesty and appointed him as his business manager. The squire had complete trust in Shmuel and entrusted him with the keys to his safe.

However, Shmuel's assistant became extremely jealous of his Jewish boss. He was looking for some way of making trouble for Shmuel, hoping to take his place.

Once, when the squire returned from a trip, he made a big party, inviting many guests. At the party, the squire asked Shmuel to bring from his safe the famous diamond he had inherited from his parents. The diamond was known to be one of the largest diamonds in the world and was priceless. All the guests waited breathlessly to behold this rare, precious gem. A few minutes later, Shmuel entered, bearing a golden box, decorated with many beautiful gems. The guests moved forward to get close to the squire and to get the best possible view of this remarkable diamond. But the squire seemed in no special hurry to open the box. First, he gave a lengthy talk on the history of the diamond, and then, finally, he opened the box.

To the horror of all present, the box was empty! The squire was speechless and looked ready to break into tears.

Some of the guests began to shout, "Hang the Jew!" But the squire could still not believe that Shmuel was guilty of such an act, especially to steal something so precious to his employer. Yet, if Shmuel was the only person who had the keys to the safe, who else could have been the thief?

Turning to his Jewish business manager, the squire said: "It appears that you were not able to resist temptation this time, when you saw this unique gem. Because of your past loyal service, however, I promise you I will not punish you if you confess your guilt and give me back my precious diamond."

"Heaven forbid," called out Shmuel. "I would never steal anything, especially anything belonging to you, my kind and generous employer. I can see that, under the present circumstances, you cannot believe otherwise. But please, I beg you; give me an opportunity

to clear myself."

Shmuel asked the squire to keep all the guests in the hall for the real thief was present there. Then he asked for permission to go home and bring something which would reveal the identity of the thief.

A short while later, Shmuel returned and, to everyone's astonishment, he had a black rooster in his hand.

"Honoured guests," called out Shmuel. "I have here a remarkable rooster. It will allow any honest person to stroke it, but when a thief does so, it will flap its wings wildly and crow at the top of its voice. And as the real thief is among us here today, I shall ask all present to come forward, one at a time, and stroke the rooster with the right hand. When the rooster starts to crow—you will know who the thief is."

Breathlessly and eagerly, the assembled participated in this strange procedure. But when the last of the guests had stroked the rooster and it still remained silent, all the guests began to shout:

"How dare the Jew make a laughing stock out of us with his crazy suggestion?"

But Shmuel calmly requested their patience, insisting that they would soon discover the thief. Then Shmuel asked the guests to lift up their right hands. They did so, and what the assembled saw were a load of black hands except for one white hand. The white hand was that of Shmuel's assistant.

"There is the thief," called out Shmuel. "The rooster I brought is a rooster like any other rooster. All I did was smear its back with soot. I knew that the real thief would be afraid to stroke the rooster in case it would begin to crow. So he just pretended to stroke the rooster's back, but didn't really touch it. So you see, the hands of the innocent guests were black, while the hand of the thief remained white and clean, though in truth, it was the dirtiest in the entire hall."

"Bravo!" cried all the guests, and made a rush to grab the thief. The culprit had no choice but confess that he had managed to get copies made of the keys to the squire's safe. He had been quite sure that the Jew would be blamed for the theft. The thief received his just punishment, while Shmuel kept his important trusted position.

(Adapted from chabad.org)

Thought of the Week

The mitzvah obligating a Jew to give up his life rather than commit one of the three 'capital sins', murder, adultery and idolatry, does not necessarily require a real situation of sacrifice.

By simply saying the first verse of 'Shema Yisrael...' and the words 'Uvechol nafshecha', while concentrating that you recognise that a life without Yirat Shamayim and Torah is worthless, and consequently you would rather be killed rather than deny Hashem's existence so totally, one can fulfil the mitzvah of loving Hashem 'with all your soul'.

Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones...

בְּיֵשֶׁת רָאֵל לְאִמִּי אֵשֶׁת כִּי תִזְרֶיעַ וְיִלְדָה זָכָר
 "When a woman conceives and give birth to a male..."

The initial letters of the words כִּי תִזְרֶיעַ וְיִלְדָה זָכָר, which is the Biblical term for discipline. when rearranged, spell the word זְכוּת, merit. The Pasuk seeks to teach us that the spiritual achievements of children are, to a great extent, the results of the actions, thoughts and emotions of their mothers. By conducting themselves in an authentically Jewish manner and by subtly inculcating their children with real Torah values, mothers influence their children in ways that the formal study with fathers and teachers cannot.

R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik (in a tribute to the Rebbeztzin of Talne) painted a vivid verbal picture of the vital role Jewish mothers play in the spiritual development of their children:

"People are mistaken in thinking that there is only one *mesorah* and one *mesorah* community; the community of fathers. It is not true. We have two *mesorot*, two traditions, two communities – the *mesorah* community of the fathers and that of the mothers,

‘שֶׁמַע בְּנֵי מוֹסֵר אָבִיךָ
 וְאֵל תֵּשֶׁת שְׂתוֹרַת אִמְךָ.’

"Hear, my son the moral instruction/lessons of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother" (Mishlei 1:8)

What is the difference between these two *mesorot*, traditions? What is the distinction between *mussar avicha* and *torat imecha*? What is that one learns from the father and from the mother?

One learns much from the father, how to classify, how to infer, how to apply, etc...One also learns from the father what to do and what not to do, what is morally right and what is morally wrong. The father teaches the son the discipline of thought as well as the discipline of action. The father's tradition is an intellectual-moral one. That is why he is identified with

Riddle for the Week

How can a person commit four Aveirot (sins) by saying one thing?
 (There are multiple answers)
 (Answer in next week's Living Torah)

Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only in formal compliance with the law but also in a living experience. She taught me that there is a flavour, a scent and warmth to the *mitzvot*. I learned from her the most important thing in life – to feel the presence of the Almighty and gentle pressure of His hand resting upon my frail shoulders. Without her teachings, which quite often were transmitted to me in silence, I would have grown up a soulless being, dry and insensitive.

The laws of Shabbos, for instance, were passed on to me by my father; they are part of *mussar avicha*. The Shabbos as a living entity, as a queen, was revealed to me by my mother; it is a part of *torat imecha*. The fathers *knew* much about the Shabbos; the mothers *lived* the Shabbos, experienced her presence and perceived her beauty and splendour.

The fathers taught generations how to observe; the mothers taught generations how to greet the Shabbos and how to enjoy her twenty-four hour presence."

Shabbat Shalom