

## QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT TAZRIA-METZORA

**Q-1. (a)** Why do the laws of childbirth in *Parashat Tazria* follow the laws of *kosher* and non-*kosher* animals in *Parashat Shemini* (2 reasons)? **(b)** (1) When 12:2 says that a woman is *tamay* for 7 days after she gives birth to a boy, why does it add “*isha ki tazria, veyalda bein*” (when a woman conceives and gives birth to a son), since obviously she conceives before giving birth (3 reasons)? (2) What 6 miracles does *Hashem* do for the unborn? (3) How does the baby’s source of nourishment demonstrate a person’s *kedusha* and dignity? (4) What, concerning a person, does *Hashem* (i) pre-ordain before birth? and (ii) what is not pre-ordained? (iii) Why is this not pre-ordained? **(c)** What parts of a fetus are formed (i) by the mother’s seed? (ii) by the father’s seed? (iii) by *Hashem*? (2 views) **(d)** Since the *mitzvah* of *brit mila* already is stated in *Parashat Lech Lecha*, why is it repeated here (2 reasons)? **(e)** (1) Why may a *brit mila* be performed no earlier than the 8<sup>th</sup> day (5 explanations)? (2) For whom may a *mila* be done before the 8<sup>th</sup> day? **(f)** Why is there a *kisei shel Eliyahu* (chair for *Eliyahu*) at every *brit mila*? **(g)** Why does 12:2,5 say that a mother is *tamay* for 7 days after the birth of a boy, but for a girl, she is *tamay* for 14 days (5 reasons)? **(h)** Why did the mother’s *korban yoledet* include (1) an *olah*? (2) a *chatat* (2 reasons)? **(i)** If a woman had triplets, how many *korbanot* did she bring? (*Vayikra* 12:2-6)

**A-1. (a)** (1) After discussing the *tuma* generated by non-*kosher* animals, the *Torah* discusses *tuma* caused by humans, who were created after the animals (*Rashi*), beginning with a woman’s *tuma* at the start of her child’s life (*ibn Ezra*). (2) The *Torah* teaches that if one is worthy, all was created before him for his benefit, but if he is unworthy, even a gnat and earthworm preceded him (*Vayikra Raba*). **(b)** (1) Adding the word “*tazria*” teaches that (i) if a woman emits her seed during marital relations before her husband emits his seed, she will give birth to a boy, but if he emits his seed first, it will be a girl (*Nida* 31a), and her “seed” refers to the blood of her uterus that attaches to her husband’s seed (*Ramban*). (ii) if the fetus was conceived but dissolved in her womb, she is still *tamay* for 7 days (*Rashi*). (iii) This phrase brings to our attention *Hashem*’s great Kindness even to the unborn by its growing in its mother’s womb and His providing for the fetus; (2) (i) Even though one who is submerged in hot water for a short time suffers injuries, the fetus thrives in the hot climate of the mother’s uterus; (ii) although the womb’s opening is at the bottom when the mother stands or sits, the fetus does not slip out; (iii) no matter how much the mother eats, she never dislocates the fetus in her belly; (iv) all nourishment that the fetus requires is automatically transferred through the placenta; (v) the fetus does not excrete its waste, which would have injured the mother; (vi) the cervix of the womb slowly dilates so that the baby’s transition to freedom is smooth; (3) while an animal provides nourishment from its udder in the lower part of its body, a human mother provides milk from the upper part of her body, close to her head (*Medrash Tanchuma*). (4) (i) Whether the person will be healthy or suffer an illness or handicap, his or her appearance, the degree of his or her intelligence, whether he or she will be wealthy or poor, and who will be his or her spouse; (ii) whether he or she will be a *tzadik* or a *rasha*; (iii) a person must take it upon himself to study *Hashem*’s Greatness and emulate His Ways to render himself a *tzadik* (*Alshich*). **(c)** (1) (i) From the mother’s seed, the skin, flesh, hair and black of the eye are formed; (ii) from the father’s seed, the child’s muscles, bones and whites of the eyes are formed; (iii) by *Hashem*, the soul, facial countenance, eyesight, hearing, the power of speech and walking, and insight and intelligence are implanted (*Nida* 31a). (2) (1) The whole embryo is formed from the mother’s blood; (ii) the father’s seed provides the *hiluli* (the force enabling matter to take form) (*Aristotle*, per *Ramban*). **(d)** The *Torah* repeated this *mitzvah* adjacent to the laws of the *korbanot* to teach that (1) just as *korbanot* may not be offered at night, a *brit mila* may not be performed at night (*Ohr haChaim*). (2) just as *korbanot* were offered on *Shabbat*, the *mila* must be performed on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, even if that day is *Shabbat*, and prohibited *melacha* is allowed on *Shabbat* for it (*Chizkuni*). **(e)** (1) (i) *Hashem* commanded that we wait until the day He knows the boy has enough strength to endure the surgery; (ii) a *brit mila* is like a *korban*, bringing the boy under the the *Shechina*’s wings, and like all animals used for *korbanot*, the baby must live through at least one *Shabbat* to elevate his *kedusha* (holiness) and be a fit “*korban*”; (iii) the *Torah* requires the mother to separate from her husband for 7 days while she is a *nida*, and it would be wrong to celebrate the *brit mila* when the parents are sad due to the separation (*Ohr haChaim*). (iv) The mother’s *nida* blood, which is *tamay*, nourished the child, and it takes 7 days for the baby to eliminate that blood, at which time, he is then sufficiently pure to enter into the holy covenant (*Sforno*). (v) This requirement teaches that a woman who is scrupulous in observing the laws of the 7 days of *nida* will be blessed with sons who will be circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day (*Vayikra Raba*). (2) For a non-Jewish boy who was converted to Judaism (*Torah Temima*). **(f)** *Eliyahu* said to *Hashem*, after King *Achav* forbade *brit mila*, “*ki azvu beritcha Bnei Yisrael*” (for *Bnei Yisrael* have forsaken Your covenant [of *mila*] – 1 *Melachim* 19:10), and since *Eliyahu* disparaged *Bnei Yisrael*, *Hashem* required that he bear witness every time they fulfill this *mitzvah* (*Pirkei deRebi Eliezer*). **(g)** (1) When a boy is born, everyone rejoices, but for a girl, there is a measure of sadness, and in deference to the joy, *Hashem* removes the boy’s *tuma* earlier (*Nida* 31b). (2) When a boy is born, people are glad that he will not endure labor pains, but for a girl, there is sadness that she will endure the pain when she grows up (*Maharsha*). (3) The fluid in the womb of a mother carrying a girl, unlike a boy, is abundant and cold, and it takes longer for her to be cleaned of the cold and abundant blood (*Ramban*). (4) It takes twice as long for a female embryo to form – 81 days – as it does for a male embryo – 41 days (*ibn Ezra*). (5) Since a father is more responsible to raise his sons, and a mother is more responsible to raise her daughters, her purifying period after childbirth is longer for a girl (*Hirsch*). **(h)** (1) with the *olah*, the woman thanks *Hashem* for rescuing her from the birth pangs and allowing her to survive the childbirth (*Sefer haChinuch* – *Mitzvah* 168). (2) (i) The *chatat* atones for her possibly swearing, during her labor pains, never again to live with her husband, which is a vow that she will violate (*Nida* 31b). (ii) The *chatat* is an atonement for *Chava*’s sin, which resulted in a decline in the holiness of childbearing by including the *yeitzer hara*’s lust (*R. Bechaya*). **(i)** She would bring only 2 *korbanot* (one *olah* and one *chatat*), since they atone for her, not for the babies (*Keritot* 9b).

**Q-2. (b)** What are 10 differences between (i) the natural disease of leprosy and (ii) the Divine *tzara’at*? **(c)** (1) Where in *Tanach* do we see *tzara’at* resulting from: (i) idol worship? (ii) immorality? (iii) murder? (iv) blasphemy? (v) acting in an improper capacity? (vi) swearing a false oath? (vii) *lashon hara*? (2) Why did *Hashem* also inflict *tzara’at* for: (i) *chilul Hashem* (desecration of *Hashem*’s name)? (ii) conceit? (iii) acting miserly? **(d)** Since the the *kashrut* laws in *Parashat Shemini* are closely followed by the *tzara’at* laws, why was *tzara’at* not a punishment for eating non-*kosher* food? (*Vayikra* 13:1-3,33)

**A-2. (b)** (1) (i) Leprosy begins with a swelling and darkening of the skin, (ii) but *tzara’at* caused no swelling, and the skin turned white; (2) (i) *Shechin Mitzrayim*, the most severe form of leprosy, does not render the person *tamay*, (ii) but *tzara’at* did; (3) (i) for leprosy, the appearance of raw flesh in the diseased area indicates an improvement, (ii) but for *tzara’at*, raw flesh indicated that the person was *tamay*; (4) (i) if the healthy flesh disappears, it indicates that the leprosy has returned, (ii) but if the *tzara’at* returned, it was a sign of *tahara* (purity); (5) (i) leprosy is diagnosed anywhere on the skin from a complete physical exam, (ii) but the *kohen* examined only the skin visible to his eye, not hidden folds; (6) (i) for a natural disease, potentially infected items would not be put in a public area, (ii) but before examining a house for *tzara’at*, the *kohen* ordered all objects removed to the street; (7) (i) leprosy is examined whenever it occurs to prevent its spread, (ii) but no one would be examined for *tzara’at* on *Shabbat* or *Yom Tov*, when people gathered in *Yerushalayim*; (8) (i) leprosy could occur anywhere, (iii) but in *Yerushalayim*, no house could be declared *tamay* with *tzara’at*; (9) (i) lepers have to be isolated, (ii) but in open towns that were not walled, a *metzora* could remain in the town; (10) (i) leprosy could affect anyone, (ii) but a *kohen* could not declare a non-Jew *tamay* with *tzara’at* (*Hirsch*). **(c)** (1) (i) The *cheit ha’eigel* worshippers were stricken with *tzara’at*; (ii) when *Pharaoh* kidnapped *Sarah* for immoral purposes, he and his court were stricken with *tzara’at*; (iii) after *Yoav* murdered *Avnair*, *David haMelech* cursed him with *tzara’at*; (iv) when *Goliat* mocked *Hashem*, he was stricken with *tzara’at*; (v) when King *Uziah* entered the *Beit haMikdash* to offer *ketoret* (incense) that only *kohanim* may offer, he was stricken with *tzara’at*; (vi) when he falsely swore to *Na’aman* that *Elisha* had sent him, *Geichazi* and his sons were stricken with *tzara’at*; (vii) when *Miriam* spoke *lashon hara* against *Moshe*, she was stricken with *tzara’at*; (2) (i) Since mankind exists only for the purpose of sanctifying *Hashem*’s Name, when one does the opposite, he is worthy of death, and *tzara’at* is a punishment as terrible as death; (ii) being conceited is like idol worship, since both sins presume that *Hashem*’s Glory does not fill the world; (iii) *tzara’at* was inflicted *mida keneged mida* – since he refused to lend his possessions to others, *tzara’at* afflicted his house, and when the *kohen* ordered that his possessions be put in the street, everyone saw that he had those things that he refused to lend (*Vayikra Raba*). **(d)** Since one is careful about what he puts in his mouth but is lax about what comes out, *Hashem* brought *tzara’at* not on one who devoured pork, but to warn one who “devoured” people with evil speech (*Y. Salanter*). (*Bamidbar* 6:9,18).

**Q-3. (a)** What was the purpose of *nega’im* (afflictions of *tzara’at*) on clothing and houses? **(b)** Why does the *Torah* call a *nega* on clothing and houses a “*tzara’at momeret*” (“malevolent” *tzara’at*) (2 views)? **(c)** Why do these *nega’im* no longer occur (3 reasons)? **(d)** (1) What punishment substitutes for *tzara’at* nowadays? (2) Why (2 reasons)? (*Vayikra* 13:1-51)

**A-3. (a)** *Hashem* inflicted *nega’im* on clothing and houses to alert the owner of the clothing or the house to repent his sins, before the *tzara’at* affected his body – *nega’im* showed *Hashem*’s compassion for *Bnei Yisrael*’s accepting their mission as an *am kadosh* (holy people) (*Ramban*). **(b)** (1) It is a *nega* that is harmful; (2) it is a curse – no benefit can be derived from it (*Rashi*). **(c)** (1) When *Bnei Yisrael* were on a high level of *kedusha*, they were vulnerable to *nega’im*, but when

they descended from this plateau, they no longer were worthy of reminders from *Hashem* to repent, and there have been no *nega'im* for many generations (*Sforno*). (2) *Nega'im* were open miracles that we do not merit today (*Ramban*). (3) There are no *nega'im* today since people cannot be cured without purification in the *Beit haMikdash* (*Shalah*). (d) (1) Poverty, (2) (i) both a *metzora* and a pauper are considered "dead," and (ii) poverty atones for the sin of *lashon hara*, which is a cause of *tzara'at* (*Chofetz Chaim*).

**Q-4.** (a) Why does 14:2 first say that on the day on which a *metzora* (one who was afflicted with *tzara'at*) is purified, "he shall be brought to the *kohen*", then, 14:3 says, "the *kohen* shall go forth [to the *metzora*]" (4 reasons)? (b) (1) Why do all purifications from *tuma* require immersion in water (2 reasons)? (2) If a person was *tamay*, was he obligated to purify himself? (c) (1) Why did *Hashem* assign *kohanim* the responsibility to determine whether or not *nega'im* (afflictions) were *tzara'at* that rendered a person *tamay*? (2) Why was a *kohen* not eligible to determine whether the *nega* of his own relative was *tamay*? (d) (1) Why did all of the *metzora's* hair have to be shaved off (2 reasons)? (2) Since the *metzora* had to shave all of his hair, why does the *Torah* specify the removal of hair on his (i) head? (ii) beard? (iii) eyebrows? (3) Did a *metzora's payot* have to be shaved off? (e) After the *metzora* was shaved, (1) what restriction on him was lifted? (2) what 3 restrictions remained until he offered the *korbanot*? (f) After the *metzora* was shaved, and before he offered the *korbanot*, what did (1) *metzora* have to do? (2) the *kohen* have to do? (*Vayikra* 14:2-9)

**A-4.** (a) It tells us that (1) only the word of a *kohen* purifies a *metzora*, but even though the *tzara'at* has disappeared, he is not yet *tahor*, and the *kohen* must go to him (*Ramban*). (2) the *metzora* must not delay going to the *kohen* – on the day he is purified, he must be brought to the *kohen*, even against his will; (3) a *kohen* who is a *metzora* cannot rule on the symptoms of *tzara'at* (*Sifra*). (4) since the *metzora* has repented, *Hashem* honors him by having the *kohen*, accompanied by younger *kohanim* who want to learn about his ruling on *tzara'at*, meet the *metzora* (*Sifte Kohan*). (b) (1) (i) Since the universe was entirely water before *Hashem* created man (*Bereishit* 1:2), immersion in water "re-creates" one's body, causing one's actions to be new and for the good (*Sefer haChinuch – Mitzvah* 173). (ii) Just as water cleanses everything washed in it, it cleanses one's spirit from every sin; (2) no, if one chose to remain *tamay*, he could, but a pious person was unworthy to be in the repulsive state of *tuma* (*Mitzvah* 175). (c) (1) Since *tzara'at* signified a character deficiency in the *metzora*, it was appropriate for the offspring of peaceful *Aharon* to check out a *nega* and give constructive criticism to the *metzora* (*Kli Yakar*). (2) He would not be impartial in determining *tuma* (*Nega'im* 2:5). (d) (1) (i) The shaving marked the purification of the skin on which the symptoms of *tzara'at* appeared (*Tosfos haRosh*). (ii) One who is purified should consider himself like a hairless newborn and should change his deeds anew for the better (*Sefer haChinuch – Mitzvah* 174). (2) The *Torah* points out that (i) the head signifies his arrogance, and the *lashon hara* that he spoke about another person had to be removed; (ii) the beard surrounds his mouth, which spoke the *lashon hara*; (iii) the eyebrows represent the jealousy that caused him to speak ill of others, and the *metzora* had to remove these traits from his character like the shaven hair was removed from his body (*Kli Yakar*). (3) All of his hair, including his *payot*, had to be shaven (*Rambam Hilchot Tumat Tzara'at* 11:1). (e) (1) The *metzora* again was allowed to enter a walled city; (2) he could not (i) live with his wife; (ii) enter the Temple Mount; (iii) eat *korbanot*; (f) (1) he counted 7 days, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, he immersed himself and his clothing in a *mikvah*; (2) on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the *kohen* shaved him again completely (*Rokeach*).

**Q-5.** (a) (1) Why does *Torah* say "ve-chipair" ([the *kohen*] shall atone) 3 times concerning the *korbanot* that a *metzora* offered? (2) What animals for the 3 *korbanot* did the *metzora* offer if he was (i) rich? (ii) poor? (3) How did the validity of the *korbanot* of a wealthy *metzora* differ from the validity of other *korbanot* that a wealthy person brought? (4) Why was this so? (b) For a poor *metzora*, why does the *Torah* say 3 times, "asher tasig yado" ([korbanot] for which his means are sufficient)? (c) How do these laws show *Hashem's* concern for Jewish property and lives? (d) (1) When did *tzara'at* occur as a blessing? (2) Why did *Hashem* cause this blessing to come through an affliction? (*Vayikra* 14:34)

**A-5.** (a) (1) It referred to the purpose of each of the *korbanot* that the *metzora* offered – (i) the *asham* atoned for the sin(s) that made him a *metzora*; (ii) the *chatat* atoned for any curses he may have uttered while he was isolated; (iii) the atonements of the *olah* and *mincha* elevated him so that he could rejoin the community (*Ramban*). (2) (i) 3 lambs, as the *asham*, *chatat* and *olah*; (ii) a lamb for the *asham*, and 2 turtledoves, one as a *chatat* and one as an *olah*; (3) for all other *korbanot*, if a wealthy person offered a poor person's *korban*, he fulfilled his obligation *bid'ieved*, but the poor person's *korbanot* offered by a wealthy *metzora* were not accepted (*Yoma* 41b). (4) Since *tzara'at* was caused by miserliness, a wealthy person's trying to offer a poor person's *korbanot* proved that he did not change his behavior, and the *korbanot* would not atone for his sin; (b) (1) 14:22 refers to one who had been wealthy when he became obligated to offer the *korbanot* but lost his money before slaughtering them – he brought a poor person's *korbanot*; (2) 14:30 refers to a wealthy person who slaughtered a lamb for the *asham* but lost his money before consecrating the other 2 animals – he offered 2 birds instead of expensive animals; (3) 14:31 refers to his being poor when he slaughtered the *asham*, but he became wealthy when he was to bring the turtledoves – he had to offer 2 animals that he could now afford (*Sefer haChinuch – Mitzvah* 168). (c) For a house with possible *tzara'at*, utensils were removed from the owner's house so that the *kohen* would not declare them *tamay* along with the house, and if these items became *tamay*, they could be *kashered* (except for inexpensive earthenware) – this indicates that if *Hashem* was so concerned about the possessions of a sinner who committed a sin punished by *tzara'at*, He surely had compassion for the property of righteous people, and if He was so concerned about his property, he is surely was concerned for his children's lives (*Sifra*). (d) (1) When the *Cana'anim* saw that *Bnei Yisrael* would conquer their land, they hid treasures in the walls of their houses, and *Hashem* caused the *tzara'at* so that a righteous person's house would be demolished, and thereby, he would find the treasure (*Rashi*). (2) If a person were completely guiltless, *Hashem* would let him find the treasure painlessly, but since he found it through the pain of having his house being demolished, *Hashem* was letting him know that he did a sin, the nature of which he was required to determine, and the demolition atoned for this sin (*Darash Moshe*).

**Q-6.** (a) (1) What was the purpose of a healed *zav* offering (i) a *korban chatat*? (ii) a *korban olah*? (2) (i) How was the *tahara* process for a *zav* different from that of other people who were *tamay*? (ii) Why did this requirement not apply also to a *zava* (flow from a woman's body)? (3) Why did a *metzora's korbanot* involve 3 animals, while a *zav* brought only 2 birds? (b) Why are the stringencies related to the counting of the clean days of a *zava* applied to a woman who is a *nida*? (*Vayikra* 15:2,13,15,19-25)

**A-6.** (a) (1) (i) The *chatat* atoned for the sin that caused *Hashem* to afflict the *zav*; (ii) he brought the *olah* to thank *Hashem* for curing him; (2) (i) While others who were *tamay* could purify themselves in a *mikvah*, a *zav* had to use *mayim chayim* (spring water); (ii) while the rules for *zav* and *zava* are the same, the *Torah's* adding the unnecessary words, "and afterward she can be purified", teaches that she could use a *mikvah* (*Ramban*). (3) The *metzora's korbanot*, which involved *avoda* by several *kohanim*, became publicly known, and there was no additional humiliation for him, since his isolation was already public, but a *zav's* sin was a very private matter, and *Hashem* spared him shame by having him offer 2 birds, the *avoda* for which was performed by a single *kohen* (*Meshech Chachma*). (b) Since it was difficult for a woman to determine when she was a *zava* versus when she was a *nida* without expert rabbinical guidance, women imposed on themselves the stringencies of a *zava* during the time they were a *nida*, including waiting 7 clean days before going to the *mikvah*, and *Chazal* approved these stringencies (*Nida* 66a).

**Q-7.** (a) In the *haftara*, what were the identities of the 4 *metzora'im* in *Shomron*? (b) How do we know this (2 explanations)? (II *Melachim* 7:3)

**A-7.** (a) *Geichazi* and his 3 sons (*Rashi*). (b) (1) The verse implies that the 4 of them became *metzora'im* simultaneously – this could apply only to *Geichazi* and his 3 sons, whom *Elisha* cursed to immediately become *metzora'im* (*Kli Yakar*). (2) Since *Elisha* was in *Shomron* at the time, he should have cured the 4 of them – he did not, because he had cursed them to be *metzora'im* forever in place of *Na'aman* (*Yaikut haGershuni*).