

Tazria, Metzora 2015

1.

### Mila

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

"וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו."

Why is the Torah currently discussing mila, after the fact that mila is already discussed in parshas Lech Lecha (17, 12)? Why the repetition? The Or Hachaim suggests, perhaps the pasuk in parshas Tazria is informing us that mila can only be performed during the day. Or perhaps the aforementioned pasuk is informing us that mila can be performed on Shabbos as stated in the Gemara in Shabbos 132. These answers are insufficient, because the Torah could have informed us that mila is performed on Shabbos and can only be performed during the day in parshas Lech Lecha. Rather mila is repeated again in order that we will not incorrectly conclude that the mitzvah of mila was only given to Avraham. We shouldn't think that specifically in regards to the Avos, mila overrides Shabbos since they did not receive the Torah yet. **Therefore the Torah felt it necessary to repeat the mitzvah of mila after we received the Torah. The Torah is informing us that even nowadays mila overrides Shabbos.**

We shouldn't incorrectly assume that mila is unimportant. The mitzvah of mila is of the utmost importance. The significant status of mila is evident from this fundamental Halacha of mila overriding Shabbos. We perform mila solely because Hashem commanded us to do so. The concept of mila being healthy is a nice additional benefit; however the only reason why we perform mila is because Hashem commanded us to.

The Otzros Hatorah (on mila pages 126-127) quotes the Gemara in Nedarim (32a) that says mila is so important that it equals all of the mitzvos. (גדולה מילה ששקולה כנגד כל המצוות.) What is the explanation of this Gemara? The Sheboli Haleket quotes the Medrash that says the gematria (numerical value) of ברית is 612. The mila itself counts as one. Therefore:  $1 + 612 = 613$ . This is what the Gemara means when it states that mila equals all of the mitzvos.

The Akadas Yitzchak offers another explanation of this Gemara. When a person fixes the roots, then the tree will typically be fixed. Similarly, when a person fixes the core and essence of anything, then everything else gets fixed as well. When one has mila performed his entire body gets fixed.

The Tor says that mila is better than all other positive commandments.

**What is so special about mila that it is better than all of the other mitzvos? Rabbi Yaakov Sofer (author of Caf Hachaim) logically explains that the mitzvah of mila is unique and differs from all other mitzvos in that it's painful. Performing mila with happiness in order to fulfill the will of Hashem demonstrates the will to perform all other mitzvos with happiness as well.** (This is similar to a kal v'chomer, if one can lift five pounds, then surely he can lift ten pounds. Similarly, if one fulfills the mitzvah of mila which is painful, then surely he will perform other mitzvos which are painless.)

2.

### Lashon Hara chirping

Rabbi Yerucham Leibovitz (Das Torah chalek gimal page 106)

“for the person being purified there shall be taken two live, clean birds.” (14, 4)

"וְצִנֹּה הַכֶּהֱנָן וְלָקַח לְמִטְהָר שְׁתֵּי צִפֹּרִים חַיִּים טְהוֹרִים."

Why does he need to take two birds? Rashi quotes the Gemara in Eruvin (15) which says that one of the ways tzaraas (leprosy) comes is due to lashon hara. Lashon hara is essentially verbal chirping, foolishness. Therefore the birds that chirp are brought. Why specifically birds? The Rambam (commentary to Mishna in Avos end of first perek) explains that there are five different categories of speech. The lowest form of speech is someone who speaks without a purpose and says something negative. Our ability to speak and communicate with detail, distinguishes us from other animals. As the pasuk states (Berashis 2, 7) “And Hashem formed the man of dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life; and man became a living being.” Onkelos comments that this pasuk refers to our ability to speak. When one speaks lashon hara he is essentially demonstrating that he is like a bird that chirps. Speaking lashon hara is a terrible sin.

The Mishna Berurah (intro to chalek alef) writes that without Halacha you can't do anything because there is a right way to do everything. (בלעדו לא ירים איש הישראלי את ידו ואת רגלו.)

Similarly, the Mishna in Avos (perek beis) states an ignorant person can't be pious. (לא עם הארץ.) The reason for this is because when one doesn't know the Halacha they will inevitably sin or perform mitzvos incorrectly.

The Steipler (biography titled The Steipler page 80) says it's impossible for someone who doesn't learn not to make mistakes! Rabbi Arush (the Garden of Peace chapter 14 page 315) explains the more preparation a person has the greater chances for success. (Additionally, the more preparation someone puts into something, the more he will appreciate it.) Similarly, Rav Shach says (Rav Shach Speaks page 115) it's impossible to be truly pious without study.

Someone can go to all of the derashos (sermons) in the community and learn a lot of musser stressing the importance of not speaking lashon hara, however if he doesn't learn the halachos of lashon hara he will inevitably unfortunately speak lashon hara.