



From the desk of  
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## Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad \* Batei Hora'ah \* Religious Services \* Marriage Licensing \* Kashrut \* Mikvaot \* Eiruvim

### TORAT

### Parashat Masei

### HAMELECH

#### Man Impacts Upon Land

In Parashat Masei, we are told of the Cities of Refuge to which a murderer flees. We may not take ransom to absolve a murderer from his sentence. Doing so is a sin against the land. Once a murder was committed, the land is only atoned when the murderer is brought to task.

It seems that the sin of the murderer affected the land. We find a similar concept in a number of places. Alshich (Bereishit 3:17) states that the sin of man contaminated the land. Until that point, the land produced fruit and vegetables without any waste product. Once Adam sinned, thorns and thistles grew, and even the wheat kernel grows in husks and shells which must be discarded.

#### *Din and Cheshbon*

In the times of the Mabul, "Elokim saw the land that it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the land." (Bereishit 6:12)

Zohar HaKadosh (I 68a) states that man's corrupt ways affected his surroundings. Not only does a sinner affect other people, he even affects animals and vegetation and the inanimate.

See Yirmiya (chap. 2) "You came and polluted my land." Different countries have different tendencies (See Kiddushin 49). When a person visits a land whose inhabitants have a tendency to steal, he has to be very careful not to become a thief! If the people there are immoral, he is also in danger of following suit.

The stones and beams of a person's home will testify about him on the Judgment Day. Each

deed he did, positive or negative, made its mark on the walls and furniture. These marks may not be discernable to the human eye, but Hashem detects them clearly.

In the generation of the Mabul, people were so corrupt and disloyal and immoral that the animals and even the vegetation began to follow suit.

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein thus explains the terms "din" and "cheshbon." "Din" is for the basic deed. "Cheshbon" is for the effect the deed had upon the environment. (Chashukei Chemed Chullin 62b)

#### How to Build a Good Jewish Home

When Klal Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael, a number of houses developed *tsoraat* marks and had to be decimated, only to unearth hidden treasures. Sometimes stones had to be replaced with new stones and sometimes entire edifices had to be demolished.

Zohar HaKadosh (Tazria p.50) explains a deep reason for this. When a person does something, the thoughts and words which he puts into the endeavor bear a tremendous impact. As Klal Yisrael donated towards the *mishkan*, they had very lofty and holy thoughts and words. That invested those donations with holiness, allowing for the *Shechinah* to reside in the *mishkan*.

Also when a person builds his own home, he should state explicitly that he is doing so for the sake of the will of Hashem. That invites the *Shechinah* into his home.

The Cananites in Eretz Yisrael were steeped in idol worship. Some were avid idolaters and



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others were not so into it; they just did it because that's what everyone around them was doing. So some of them even built their houses for the sake of *avodah zarah*. But other houses were constructed without such bad intentions. Only Hashem knew which were which.

Those houses which were built for the sake of *avodah zarah* could not be used to house good Jewish families. It just couldn't be. So Hashem had them come down with *tsoraat*. More significant than the physical treasure which was unearthed, was the spiritual gain of destroying such a spiritually harmful place and rebuilding upon its ruins a new home, brick by brick, investing it with *kedushah* and proper *kavanot*.

Therefore, Sefer Siftei Cohen (talmid of Beit Yosef), parshat Metzora, says how to build a home: not with stolen material, for that will destroy the home. Build it for the sake of *kedushah* so that no *tumah* is done there. Put a *mezuzah* by every doorway. Learn Torah in home, especially at night, as that serves as fire insurance (see Sanhedrin 92a). Just as the body is the residence of the soul, one's home is the residence of the body and as such, must be holy.

A person bears influence upon the walls of his home, through his deeds and words. In turn, the walls then influence all who enter the home.

### Holy Sukkan

In Bava Metzia 59, Rabbi Eliezer announced, "Let the walls of the Beit Medrash prove." Kol Eliyahu explains that he was calling upon the walls of the Beit Medrash to testify to his diligence in learning.

Sefer Yaarot Devash speaks of how important it is to keep your *sukkan* holy, maintaining

segregation of genders and disallowing card games and profanity. A *sukkan* should be used for matters of *kedushah* and then the *Shechinah* will reside there.

### Religious Donkeys

A person's good behavior can make a positive impact upon his animals. For example, Avraham's camels would not enter Lavan's house until he removed the impurities. (Avot de Rabbi Natan 8:8)

The donkey of R' Pinchus ben Yair would not eat barley until it was tithed (Chullin 7a). The donkey of R' Yosi of Yukrat would not return home until the renter put the exact amount of rental fee on its back. One day, the renter forgot a pair of shoes on its back. The donkey would not budge until the shoes were removed.

One day, thieves stole the donkey of R' Pinchus ben Yair. It refused to eat and drink, so they let it go. The donkey marched back home and Rabbi Pinchus understood that it hadn't eaten in three days! Even at home, it would not eat until R' Pinchus first tithed the food. (Yerushalmi Demai 1:3)

We are all familiar with the cow which would not plow on Shabbat.

All of these prove our point, how even the animals of the righteous became influenced by their pious ways.

May we merit to take this message to heart and strive to be positive influences upon our surroundings.

**Shabbat Shalom,  
Mordechai Malka**