

LAMPLIGHTER

5 Iyar
Parshas
Tazria - Metzora
1188
24 April
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Tazria and Metzora. Metzora continues with Tazria's discussion of spiritual purity and impurity. Although not applicable today, after the destruction of the Holy Temple, the specific instructions how to purify ourselves after becoming spiritually impure will once again be followed when the third Holy Temple will be established, after the coming of Moshiach.

The first form of impurity to be dealt with is the plague of leprosy, a disease which was visited upon an individual because of the sin of slander. This leprosy bore no resemblance to the modern-day affliction with the same name, but was a Divine punishment sent to make an individual aware of his transgression and afford him the opportunity to repent. This leprosy could affect the person's skin, or even spread to his garments, his furnishings, or the walls of his house. The only authority qualified to determine whether or not a suspicious spot was indeed leprosy was a priest, who then bore the responsibility of effecting the leper's purification, by following the procedure outlined in the Torah.

Once the determination that a person was leprosy was made, the individual was sent outside the camp of the Children of Israel, and made to dwell in absolute seclusion for seven days. After rending his garments, he was forbidden to cut his hair or wash his clothes, much like a person in mourning, until the leprosy was healed. Only the priest could pronounce the leprosy cured. The Torah then details the appropriate sacrifices which were to be brought, and the proper way of offering them. Only after the leper did this and immersed himself in a Mikva was he allowed to re-join the rest of society.

The leprosy which affected a garment took the form of either a red or a green spot. If, after two weeks, the leprosy persisted, even after the garment was laundered, it had to be burned. When the plague appeared on the walls of a house, the entire household had to be emptied of its vessels. If the leprosy did not disappear after a certain time, as determined by the priest, the stones of the house had to be removed, and the wall itself dismantled. In the most extreme cases, if the plague persisted, the entire house had to be destroyed. All these regulations pertained only to houses in the Land of Israel.

The affliction of leprosy followed a certain progression. Appearing first on the person's skin, it spread to his garments, vessels and house only if he did not repent of his misdeeds. G-d thereby granted the individual the opportunity to begin with a clean slate after each step, and only sent the next stage of the plague if he persisted in his evil ways.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Birth and Bar Mitzvah

By Yitschak Meir Kagan

"And G-d spoke to Moses saying: Speak to the children of Israel, saying: If a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth to a boy..." (Leviticus 12:2).

Several verses earlier, at the close of the previous Torah reading (Shemini) the Torah exhorts, "And you shall sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy" (ibid. 11:44). One of the Torah commentators explains that the juxtaposition of these two verses suggests that a husband and wife must sanctify themselves prior to conception, for their preparation may have a lasting effect upon the nature of the child to be born.¹ This effect continues throughout the child's life. The parents' conduct is a major factor in moulding the character of the child for the good--or for the bad.

And so, from birth to Bar Mitzvah there are those parents who leave no doubt in the child's mind that his Bar Mitzvah will be a graduation of sorts, when he will "graduate from Judaism." He is urged--indeed lavishly bribed--to study his *Haftora*, possibly by transliteration (it's so hard to learn to read Hebrew, you know). After all, everyone has to have a Bar-Mitzvah.

The boy is not stupid, nor are his feelings dull. He can understand and he can feel what the purpose of it all really is. Father is completely occupied with his business. His worries about the forthcoming Bar Mitzvah centre around the size and prestige of the hall. Mother is taken up with the serious consideration of the right kind of flowers for the ceremony. The only thing junior has to do is to sing-song his Hebrew words and "we'll be proud of you." The whole ceremony is empty. It means little to the parents, even less to the youngster. Is it any wonder that such an upbringing creates a rift between parents and children? Years later, when the parents plead tearfully with their son, "Why have you humiliated us?" he will retort bitterly, "Did you ever give me something more meaningful to stand on? You taught me to imitate others, to seek their approval. That's all I ever learned from you."

From conception and throughout the youngster's life, parents must be aware that they are responsible for moulding the child's character and Jewishness. They must put into effect the command, "And you shall sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy." To be holy is to be different, distinct. That distinction must be given to every boy and girl of our people; otherwise they see through the empty shell of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony and have only contempt for it.

Slice of LIFE

About forty years ago a Chabad Chassid, Rabbi Shalom Ber Segal worked as a headmaster in a Non-Chabad Yeshiva (Chasam Sofer) in Bnei Brak.

One day he noticed an unusual thing; one of the young pupils there was studying from the book 'Tanya'.

Now, The Tanya is universally accepted as a masterpiece but it is usually studied only by Chassidim, and generally the followers of Chabad. So Rabbi Segal asked him for an explanation.

"The Lubavitch Rebbe told me to a year ago to start learning Tanya because, of a miracle that occurred", was the answer.

With a bit of prodding the young man continued.

"My fifteen-year-old sister (then aged thirteen) was the pride of her school; she was active, intelligent and a very talented speaker.

But one morning, with no warning, she woke up unable to utter a sound. At first my mother was calm and encouraging, and then she begged, finally even tried threatening, but my sister only wept and wrote on a page,

"I want to talk, but nothing comes out. My mother called my father from work S.O.S. and he too tried to be calm, 'It's probably just laryngitis or fatigue or even nerves. No sense rushing to the doctor, just a little rest will do the trick'."

But after three days the entire family was hysterical.

Finally they contacted a Professor in Tel-Aviv and, although his secretary at first told them that they would have to wait four months, when she heard their story the Professor agreed to see them immediately and in a half hour they were knocking at his door.

The Professor received them cordially, showed them in and asked my sister to sit down. But as he began to examine her, the expression on his face turned to anger.

He looked up at my parents, furiously threw his wooden tongue-depressor into the garbage pail, leaned toward them and shouted,

"Who do you think you are trying to fool?!!! Do you think I am some child that you can play games with me?!!!"

They were astounded; their eyes wide in amazement.... What did they do wrong? "We don't understand," Stammered her mother. "What?"

"Don't understand, is it?!!" the Doctor sputtered.

"My dear lady, your daughter was born with no vocal chords! She has never spoken a word in her entire life!!!"

My parents looked at each other in shock. What was going on here!??

"But" Stammered my father "It can't be! Why just three days ago she spoke perfectly! For years... all her life... she spoke beautifully! Here, you can ask the Principal of her school. She was the prize student, I promise you!!!"

In minutes, the doctor's secretary had the Principal on the phone and the Professor was grilling him. But after a few minutes the Professor thanked him, hung up the phone, and turned to the parents.

"It's impossible! I never saw anything like it in my life!! I swear, I stake my reputation on it, that it is physically impossible that this girl..."

He began pacing back and forth deep in thought. Suddenly he stopped, turned to my parents and said:

"Listen, I don't understand what is happening here. I apologize for what I said to you earlier, and for getting angry. I'm sorry... but there is absolutely nothing that can be done, or at least that I can do."

But they did not give up. There is more than one doctor in the world, they thought. So for the next few months they travelled from doctor to doctor hearing the same story, until finally they ended up in the office of a Professor in England who was supposed to be the foremost in the field. He was their last medical hope...and he too, disappointed them.

Now it just so happened that while in England they were staying by a cousin of theirs, who, when he saw the looks on their faces when they returned from the Professor, suggested that they go to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe, "If anyone can help he can."

But my father wanted no part of it. "No sense in getting desperate" he said, "we aren't Chabadniks. This is obviously a thing from G-d and only Hashem can help, and I'm sure He will help, etc. etc."

But his arguments didn't work. My mother was all for it. That day they bought the plane tickets and two days later they

were at the Rebbe's headquarters, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn N.Y.

Back in those days there wasn't such a line to see the Rebbe and because of the urgent nature of their visit, the next evening they were scheduled for "Yechidus"; the Rebbe would see them privately.

Later, my mother told me that the moment they entered the Rebbe's room she felt for the first time there was really hope; there was someone who really cared, and she couldn't restrain her aching heart. For five minutes she wept and poured out her soul until, when she finished, the Rebbe requested that, if they didn't mind, he would like to speak with my sister alone.

When they closed the door behind them, the Rebbe looked deeply at my sister and said:

"I know that you are an intelligent and mature girl and that is why I'm going to tell you this.

In your previous incarnation (Gilgul) you did things that were not good. (I always imagined it was Loshon HaRa). It's not important what they were, but the only way to correct them was to have your soul come into this world and be mute from birth. But in heaven you have some very holy relatives and on their merit you were given the power to speak... until three days ago."

The Rebbe paused until it was clear that she understood and then continued.

"Now, this is where you come in. If you are willing to accept on yourself to make Shabbat parties every Shabbat, invite all the non-observant children in your area, and talk to them about Judaism, you will be able to talk again. Do you understand?"

She nodded her head, "yes".

"Do you agree?" She again nodded "yes".

"If so" continued the Rebbe, "Say yes."

Tears were streaming down her cheeks as she gazed into the pure blue eyes of the Rebbe. Without hesitating she clearly said...

"Yes"

From that moment on my sister spoke normally, and every Shabbat she makes a party with more than 50 girls from all over.

The next year my parents took me to receive the Rebbe's blessing. He asked me where I'm going to learn Torah, and when I told him he answered: "Because you are going to be learning in a Chassidic yeshiva, it is a good idea that you should learn Tanya a half-hour each day." And that is why I learn Tanya."

(Source: Rav Pinchas Segal, the brother of Rabbi Shalom Ber Segal).

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ISSUE 1188

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The reward of the souls and their existence in the World of Souls is called the Garden of Eden by our Sages. After the World of Souls will come the era of Moshiach, which is part of this world. At the conclusion thereof, the great judgment and the resurrection of the dead will occur. This is the recompense that includes the body and the soul... This is the great principle that is the hope of all who look longingly to the Holy One, blessed be He. The people of the resurrection will exist forever, from the time of the resurrection of the dead, to the world-to-come, which is an everlasting world. (Nachmanides - The Gate of Reward)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

25th of Cheshvan, 5735 [1974]

Greeting and Blessing:

As I inquire periodically from our mutual friends about you and your family, I was pleased to receive word about your recent birthday.

No doubt you know that Chasidim observe special customs in connection with a birthday. These also reflect the significance of a birthday in Jewish life.

In general, these customs comprise three items: 1) an Aliyah (being called up to the Torah) on the preceding Shabbos; if at all possible, 2) additional Torah study on the birthday itself, 3) an extra donation for Tzedokoh [charity] on the birthday - if a weekday, or before or after, if it occurs on Shabbos.

Needless to say, Jewish customs are meaningful in many ways. It would take us too far afield to mention more than one aspect in regard to each of the above three customs.

The Aliyah to the Torah, on the preceding Shabbos, which is by way of preparation for the birthday, emphasizes that with each birthday the Jew rises to a higher spiritual level. This is indicated also by the word Aliyah ("going up"). And, although the term also refers to the physical ascent of actually going up to the Bimah which is on a higher level than the floor of the Shul, its real meaning is the spiritual aspect. Indeed, it is precisely because of the spiritual ascent (achieved through the reading and study of the Torah) that the Bimah is elevated.

The particular relevance of the birthday is this: a person, of course, grows physically and mentally from day to day and from year to year, so that in some respects the person is not exactly the same today as the day before. Certainly in the spiritual sphere the birthday is meant to bring about an essential (not merely superficial) change, since on that day his Mazel is renewed.

By that is meant, as the Gemoroh expresses it "mazelayu chozi", the "root" of the soul, which remains attached to its Source On High, while only an extension of the soul, as it were, descends into the body and vitalizes it. For, obviously, the soul which is eternal and part of "real G-dliness" could not be "wholly confined" within the body, any more than G-d Himself could be confined within the world He created. And just as G-d is both in the world and beyond it (immanent and transcendent) so it is in regard to the soul and body.

Therefore, when the birthday comes, the Jew is expected to ascend to a higher level in an essential way, namely by strengthening the very root of the soul, when, as a matter of course, the change is felt also in the "lower" aspect of the soul that vitalizes the physical body. Such a change can be achieved only through Torah, which is "our very life and the length of our days."

The second observance - an increase in the actual Torah study - follows the first, but in a more tangible way, namely the study of the Torah with understanding and comprehension, so that it permeates the mind and is reflected in actual living experience in the daily life.

The third item - the giving of Tzedokoh - signifies the giving of oneself, both of body and soul. Since a person consists of both body and soul, his growth and advancement has to encompass both the spiritual and the physical. If the Aliyah and Torah study primarily reflect the spiritual, the giving of Tzedokoh reflects the physical and material, namely the sweat and toil of earning money, which is then converted into something spiritual and sacred, since it is dedicated to a sacred cause, as indicated by the term "Tzedokoh."

Being kept informed by our mutual friends about your consistent advancement both spiritually and materially (in matters of Tzedokoh), there remains for me only to express the hope that since your recent birthday, you have been doing this with even greater inspiration and joy, and that the advancement is evident in both quality and quantity.

With blessings,

A WORD

from the Director

We are now in the beginning of the Hebrew month of Iyar. Iyar is unique in that, unlike all the other months of the year, every single day has its own special mitzva: sefirat ha'omer, the counting of the omer. We count the omer every day in eager anticipation of the giving of the Torah on Shavuot.

The mitzva of sefirat ha'omer expresses the concept of perpetual progress and spiritual ascent. On the first day of the omer we count "one day," on the second, "two days," and so on until we reach "49 days." Every day the number grows; every day we come that much closer to the Festival of the Giving of the Torah.

Accordingly, every day of Iyar we are reminded of the principle: "One must always ascend in matters of holiness." We must always strive to learn more Torah and observe more mitzvot, never being content with whatever we have already achieved.

When the Jewish people left Egypt they were "born" as a nation. The period of wandering through the desert was their "childhood," their "age of education," just like children before they attain majority. The giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai was the Jewish people's "Bar Mitzva," in the same way children are obligated to fulfil all the mitzvot as soon as they reach 12 or 13 years of age.

In the time that elapsed between the exodus and the giving of the Torah (the period of sefirat ha'omer), the Jewish people were like young children who are only obligated to observe certain mitzvot, as they had received only certain portions of the Torah from Moses. Their yearning to receive the entire Torah was so great that they counted the days that remained until the great event.

The season between Passover and Shavuot is thus the most appropriate time to make resolutions for good, for it is the "age of education" of the entire Jewish people. By promising G-d to increase our observance of Torah and mitzvot now, and actually fulfilling our promise, we thereby hasten the imminent Redemption with Moshiach.

J. I. Guttentag

CUSTOMS CORNER

Why do we use a simple, round ring during the wedding ceremony?

The shape of the ring signifies that just as a circle has no beginning and no end, so may the devotion and love of the new couple for each other be never ending. Some even have the custom to have any engraving (such as 14k) polished off so that the ring is completely smooth.

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The Sage, Rabbi Abba, had great love for his people and travelled around encouraging them to study the Holy Torah. One day he arrived in a small town where there were no Torah scholars. In fact, most of the townspeople there were ignorant. Rabbi Abba felt sorry for them and decided on a plan by which he could increase their Torah learning.

One morning he came into the local synagogue and made an announcement: "Whoever would like to have great wealth and be granted life in the next world should come and learn Torah with me!" He managed to stir up a lot of interest amongst the local people and many came to study with him. Through his kind demeanour and clear method of teaching he developed a circle of eager and steady Torah learners.

One day a new face showed up at the study session. It was an intelligent-looking young man who approached Rabbi Abba, saying: "I heard about your promise of riches if one studies Torah and I would like to begin my study so that I may be able to receive them."

"Very well," replied the rabbi. Of course, Rabbi Abba hadn't meant that his students would receive actual physical gold, but spiritual riches when they learned Torah. He was sure, though, that the young man would soon come to that conclusion himself when he had developed a true appreciation of Torah. "Who are you, what is your name?" the rabbi inquired.

"I live in this town and my name is Yosay," the young man answered.

"Well, Yosay, you are welcome to join our group. From this day on your name will be Yosay the Rich!" Yosay's face lit up when he heard these words, as visions of gold shone in his eyes. Yosay came to study with Rabbi Abba every morning without fail. He grasped the material easily and Rabbi Abba saw in this young man the potential for greatness.

One day Yosay wasn't his usual self. He sat listlessly looking out of the window throughout the entire study period. When it ended Rabbi Abba approached him and asked, "Yosay, my son, what is bothering you today? I missed your questions. Today you seem to be somewhere else."

"Rabbi, I have been studying diligently for weeks and yet I haven't received any of the riches you promised me," said Yosay in an accusatory tone. Rabbi Abba was saddened to hear him speak in such a fashion, for he had hoped that by now, Yosay would have begun to love Torah study for its own sake. Nevertheless, he didn't want to dissuade him from his learning and so he answered, "My son, you are doing very well. Just be patient and continue. I have no doubt that one day you will be rich."

After hearing his teacher's encouraging words Yosay felt better and continued to study as before, but Rabbi Abba was worried about him. Would he continue to study long enough to reach his great potential, or would he give up because of his expectation of receiving a material reward?

One afternoon as Rabbi Abba was sitting alone and poring over his parchments, a strange, well-dressed gentleman approached him. "Are you Rabbi Abba?" the man inquired. "Yes, how may I help you?"

"Rabbi, I have heard that you are a great scholar and I'm hoping that you will be able to help me. I am a very wealthy man, but I never had the

opportunity to study Torah. Now I am very busy and I don't have the time or ability to begin studying at this late stage in my life. Therefore, I would like to pay someone else to learn in my place. Here, I have a solid gold goblet. It is worth a great deal of money, and I have eleven more cups just like this. I am willing to give a golden cup to whoever will 'sell' me a share in his Torah learning."

Rabbi Abba jumped at the offer. Losing not a moment he called Yosay over and introduced him to the wealthy gentleman. He explained the arrangement, and Yosay was, of course, more than happy to agree. Both parties were satisfied. Yosay devoted himself to his studies more and more diligently, until he could hardly tear himself away from the holy texts. He barely ever thought about the gold.

One evening, Rabbi Abba was alarmed to hear weeping coming from Yosay's corner of the study hall. "What happened? Why are you weeping?" he asked, fearing that his student had received bad news. "Rabbi, I can't stand it anymore! I hate the thought that I am learning G-d's Torah for a monetary reward. At first, the money was my sole motivation, but now that I understand much more, I see that my actual reward is the knowledge itself. I have gained so much and feel a great difference in myself. Now I feel like a thief taking gold in return for my beloved spiritual labours. I was foolish to make a deal like this and I just wish I could get out of it."

Rabbi Abba blinked back tears of joy, for he saw that his prize student had truly matured in his learning. His greed for riches had disappeared and been replaced with a genuine love of Torah. Rabbi Abba summoned the rich man and said, "You have reaped great rewards in Torah and mitzvot from your bargain with Yosay, but now it is time for you to share your wealth with another poor student. I will help you find a new partner. Meanwhile, know that you have succeeded greatly in this deal."

When Yosay heard what his rabbi and teacher had done for him, he couldn't contain his happiness. Yosay continued to study Torah for the rest of his long life and taught Torah to his children and grandchildren. He became known as "Yosay the Golden" because he had exchanged his rewards of gold for the study of Torah.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised (12:3)

A Jew is in essence "circumcised" even if, for whatever reason, his physical foreskin has not yet been removed. Thus the verse says, "On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised"--the flesh need to be circumcised, but, spiritually, the Jew is always "circumcised". (*Alshich*)

Said Rabbi Yitzchak: The law of the man and the law of the beast are equal. The law of man is that "On the eighth day he shall be circumcised," and the law of the beast is, "From the eighth day onward it shall be accepted as a fire offering to G-d" (Leviticus 22:27). (*Midrash Rabbah*)

The number seven represents the natural, and the number eight represents the holy. This is why circumcision on the eighth day takes precedence over Shabbat, the seventh day. (*Keli Yakar*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 24 APRIL 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
5.24MELBOURNE.....	6.21
5.24ADELAIDE.....	6.19
5.05BRISBANE.....	5.58
6.19DARWIN.....	7.09
5.03GOLD COAST.....	5.56
5.29PERTH.....	6.23
5.05SYDNEY.....	6.00
5.12CANBERRA.....	6.07
5.11LAUNCESTON.....	6.09
5.27AUCKLAND.....	6.23
5.21WELLINGTON.....	6.19
5.08HOBART.....	6.07
5.02BYRON BAY.....	5.55
6.49SINGAPORE.....	7.39



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAR STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORAH
5 IYAR • 24 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:24 PM
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:00 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:36 AM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:21 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	9:15 AM
	MAARIV:	5:25 PM
		6:15 PM
		9:00 PM