

LAMPLIGHTER

2 Iyar
Parshas
Tazria - Metzora
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Tazria and Metzora. Tazria comes from the Hebrew word meaning "to plant seeds." Why does a farmer sow his field? For the purpose of obtaining a greater yield than he started with. It makes no sense to go to all that work if the end result will be quantitatively the same as before. Thus the whole point of planting seeds is to eventually harvest a larger crop of produce.

The Jewish soul, sent from the celestial spheres down into the physical world, is likened to a seed that is planted in the earth. Once en clothed within a physical body and able to perform practical mitzvot (commandments), the soul can obtain a very great "crop" from its service in this world.

In the allegorical sense, man's service of G-d is likened to the act of sowing. His mission in life is to produce the greatest possible yield by sowing goodness within himself, his family and friends, and within the world at large. His study of Torah and performance of the commandments are like seeds that germinate into an overwhelmingly abundant yield of good.

Exile, too, is likened to the act of sowing. The actions we perform during the galut (exile) serve the function of cultivating and hastening their later outgrowth in the Messianic era.

The second Torah portion that is read this week is Metzora, which opens with the words "This shall be the law of the leper." In many places this portion is known simply as "This Shall Be."

The words "This shall be" are in the future tense. They constitute G-d's promise that so it shall be, that after the difficult process of sowing there will be much to harvest. After the exile, the redemption will surely arrive. When Moshiach comes we will reap all the fine fruits that grew from the seeds we planted throughout the years of exile.

Thus the two Torah portions, Tazria and Metzora ("This Shall Be"), are symbolic of exile and redemption. In many years (as this one) they are read together, on the same Shabbat.

Whenever two Torah portions are combined it signifies that their themes are interrelated. Exile and redemption constitute a natural sequence; the redemption follows the exile immediately upon its conclusion.

We who are still in exile and involved in the act of "sowing" must thus always strive to connect ourselves in all we do to the imminent Final Redemption, just as Tazria is connected to Metzora. Our "seeds" must be sown with a sense of perpetual longing and anticipation of Moshiach's coming. We must never reconcile ourselves to remaining in exile, but repeatedly demand and pray to G-d that He fulfill His promise. In this way we will merit the true and complete Redemption, immediately and at once.

The Wonder That Is Woman

By Yanki Tauber

G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "A woman who shall conceive and give birth . . ." (Leviticus 12:1-2)

It happens 250 times a minute, almost 15,000 times every hour. It happens after years of effort and anticipation, or "by accident." It occurs on every socioeconomic level, in every country and village in the world. But no matter how frequently it transpires, no matter how commonplace an event it is, we always stand back in awe and say: a miracle.

That one being should give birth to, should create, another. If there is any area in which a creature emulates its Creator—if there is any act by which we express the spark of divinity at our core—it is the miracle of birth.

Yet it is in this, the most G-dly of our achievements, that we also most reveal the limitations of our individuality. Feeding, sleeping, thinking, producing a work of art or building a house—virtually everything we do, we can do on our own. But giving birth to a child is something we can do only together with another person. To give birth, we must cease to be an entity unto ourselves and become a part, a component, of a community of two.

Because if we are only what we are, we are most decidedly not divine. As beings unto ourselves, we are finite and self-absorbed things, manufacturers rather than creators. To create, we must rise above our individuality. To actualize our divine essence, we must transcend the bounds of self.

It is the woman, not the man, who gives birth. It is the woman who is most fulfilled in parenthood, and who most acutely feels the lack when parenthood is denied her. It is the woman who continues to mother her child long after the man has fathered it. It is the woman, according to Torah law, who exclusively determines the spiritual identity of her child.

Because it is the woman who most surrenders her selfhood to create life. She is the passive and receptive element in the procreation process. For nine months, her very body ceases to be hers alone as it bears and nurtures another life. So it is the woman, rather than the man, who "conceives and gives birth," and to whom motherhood is a state of being, rather than an "achievement" or "experience."

Yet everyone can become a "mother." What comes naturally to the female half of creation can be learned and assimilated by all, and not only in giving birth to children but in every one of life's endeavors. We all have the power to recognize that there is more to our existence than the narrow confines of individual identity.

We all have the power to become more than we are and to do more than we can—by becoming receptive to the divine essence that underlies the self and pervades the whole of existence.

Slice of LIFE

Touching Moments

by Rabbi Udi Studnitz

Ayal had several job offers in the United States. I had met him in my work as an emissary of the Rebbe in the Kiryat HaYovel neighborhood in Jerusalem. Ayal left Israel, but we kept in touch. Several weeks ago, he called and excitedly told me about an instance of Divine Providence that had greatly inspired him.

After moving to the U.S., Ayal opened a new company and did very well. A few months ago, he invited his younger brother to come and work for him. He looked for a small car for his brother so he could get around. He met an Israeli who dealt in used cars and the Israeli promised him a terrific car for \$2,300.

They closed the deal, and Ayal gave him the money and got the car. He soon discovered it was a lemon. He angrily called the Israeli and demanded his money back. The Israeli refused. Ayal was furious and insisted the deal was off but the Israeli disagreed. Ayal began shouting at him but nothing helped. The man hung up the phone.

For the next three nights, Ayal couldn't sleep since he was so upset. He imagined what he would do to that Israeli if he caught him.

It was at this time that he received an unexpected e-mail from a Chabad House in his area. He had no idea how he had gotten

on their email list since he had never visited and had no connection with them. In the email, the shliach (emissary) asked people to come and be part of a minyan at the Chabad House on a certain day because one of the members had to say the mourner's prayer of Kaddish. The shliach included this thought from the book "Bringing Heaven Down to Earth" based on the teaching of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Rabbi Tzvi Freeman's book:

How you treat others is how G-d treats you. How you forgive them is how He forgives you. How you see them is how He sees you.

When you show empathy for the plight of another human being, G-d takes empathy in your plight.

When others slight you and you ignore the call to vengeance that burns inside, G-d erases all memory of your failures toward Him. When you see the image of G-d in another human being, then the image of G-d becomes revealed within you.

These words touched his heart. He felt that it related to what he had been feeling. On the spot, he decided he would forgive the Israeli who cheated him. He would be happy if he could get his money back, but he resolved to drop the feelings of anger and revenge that had so consumed him. He was willing to forgive him and to have pity on one who had fallen so low. The next day he attended the minyan where he became acquainted with new people. This led to a few new business deals. Right after the prayers, the car dealer called him and said he had reconsidered and was willing to return all his money!

When I was still a yeshiva student, on Friday afternoon when our classes were over, I would go with a friend to a mall in the Ramat Aviv neighborhood where my yeshiva was. We would

set up a table at the entrance to the mall and urge men and boys to put on Tefilin. Throughout the many hours we were there each Friday afternoon, we barely managed to get eight people to put on Tefilin. The atmosphere in Ramat Aviv, an extremely secular neighborhood in Israel, was very hostile. Every third person who passed by would make a cutting remark. We would smile and wish him a good day, trying not to get involved in debates.

On one of those Fridays, feeling helpless, we jokingly said that although it was hard to find people in this particular neighborhood willing to put on Tefilin, the day would come when people would be so eager to do so that they would chase after us and want to pay us for it. We laughed about how we would make all kinds of sales like two for one, etc.

The following Friday we were standing at our Tefilin table as usual when an expensive car stopped near us and a bare-headed, elegantly dressed man emerged. He put his hand in his pocket and took out a wad of hundred dollar bills. He came over and gave both of us a hundred dollar bill, saying, "I want to give this money to you because you put Tefilin on with people; continue what you're doing." He told us that the money was for us and not for us to give to charity. We stood there open-mouthed. This was not an everyday occurrence!

After we had recovered somewhat, we tried asking our benefactor who he was, but he refused to disclose any details. He departed as mysteriously as he arrived.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Explaining Volcanic Eruptions and other Cosmic Catastrophes

In reply to your letter, briefly:

You ask how can we reconcile the attributes of G-d of mercifulness and kindness with cosmic catastrophes such as volcanic eruptions and the like, involving the loss of human life, etc.

There are many circumstances involved in each event, in addition to time and location. However, there is one general answer to such apparently inexplicable occurrences, which will become clearer through the following illustration: Suppose one encounters an individual for a brief period of time, finding him asleep, or engaged in some arduous toil. Now, if the observer would want to conclude from what he sees during that brief period of time as to the nature of the individual he had observed, he would then conclude that the individual has an unproductive existence—in the first instance; or leads a life of torture—in the second. Obviously, both conclusions are erroneous, inasmuch as what he saw was only a fraction of the individual's life, and the state of sleep was only a period of rest and preparation for activity, and—in the second instance—the toil was a means to remuneration or other satisfaction which by far outweighs the effort involved. The truth is that any shortsighted observation, covering only a fraction of time or of the subject, is bound to be erroneous, and what may appear as negative will assume quite a different appearance if the full truth of the before and after were known.

Similarly in the case of any human observation of a world event. The subject of such an observation is thus taken out of its frame of eternity, of a chain of events that occurred before and will occur afterwards. Obviously, we cannot expect to judge about the nature of such an event with any degree of accuracy. A volcanic eruption or earthquake and the like are but one link in a long chain of events that began with the creation of the world and will continue to the end of times, and we have no way of interpreting a single event by isolating it from the rest.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

What is a Chassid?

Question: What does the term "chassid" mean?

Answer: A fairly accurate rule of thumb is that if your question can be answered with one answer, then you haven't asked much of a question. A truly significant question will always provoke numerous, different, and even contrasting answers. Here are some of the answers that appear in the writings and teachings of the chassidic masters to address the question of "what is a chassid":

1) A chassid is pious. This definition actually predates the modern chassidic movement by many centuries: according to the Talmud, a "chassid" is a person who fulfills his or her duties toward G-d and fellow "beyond the line of the law"—beyond what is commanded and obligatory.

2) A chassid is selfless. A chassid is a person who will forgo his own needs for the sake of another's. In fact, a chassid will go so far as to sacrifice his own spiritual betterment for the sake of a fellow's material benefit (though the distinction has gotten a bit complicated after Chassidism's founder, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, declared that "the physical life of a Jew is a spiritual thing").

3) A chassid is a mystic. A chassid doesn't just study Kabbalah—he also understands it. Chassidic teaching takes the deepest secrets of Torah—concepts and narratives that, through the ages, were revealed to only a select few sages in every generation—and makes them accessible and comprehensible to every individual, and applicable in every individual's life.

4) A chassid is alive. A chassid does everything with vitality, joy and passion.

5) A chassid is a revolutionary. A chassid never accepts the status quo. The fact that something is a certain way doesn't mean that it should remain that way; in fact, it probably means that it's here to be improved, transformed, reinvented. This includes the chassid's own self. The chassid is a person who wakes up each morning and says to himself: I feel this way? Then perhaps I must change the way I feel. The world thinks this way? Then we must change the world's thinking. A chassid believes that it's not enough to behave a certain way and do certain things; rather, a person's task in life is to recreate himself and remake the world.

A WORD

from the Director

The Land of Israel is not like other lands. Other countries' borders are determined by wars, treaties and politics. The Land of Israel's borders are determined by G-d. There are many mitzvot that apply only in Israel; anywhere else in the world, and you can't do them.

The Land of Israel is called the Holy Land for a reason: its very soil is hallowed, permeated with G-dliness and holiness. It is a land "upon which the eyes of G-d rest, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." The very air itself "makes one wise," according to our Sages.

After the terrible destruction of the Holocaust, G-d gave the Jewish people a wonderful gift - the opportunity to return to their ancestral home and live according to their own dictates. For the first time in almost 2,000 years, millions of Jews were able to take refuge in the Holy Land. But not only would the Land of Israel provide physical refuge, it was a golden opportunity for real spiritual freedom. For even though the Jewish people would remain in galut (the exile will end only with Moshiach's coming, may it happen immediately), Jews would be able to practice Torah and mitzvot proudly and openly. In allowing Jews political autonomy, G-d gave them a chance for true independence, which can only be attained through the Torah.

Shleimut ha'aretz, literally "the integrity of the land," means that the whole and complete Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people. Given by G-d to every single Jew, it simply isn't in our power to reject this gift. Aside from the fact that it is against Torah law to cede portions of Israel to non-Jews (thereby putting Jewish lives in danger), the land always retains its special, holy nature.

May G-d continue to guide His people along the right path, and help us to live up to His expectations.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Everyone in the holy city of Jerusalem knew Shalom the shamash, the young sexton who tidied up and maintained order in the famous "Beit Kel" yeshiva. Quiet by nature, he would fetch books for the Torah scholars and in general, make himself useful. But all in all, there was nothing extraordinary about Shalom that would raise any eyebrows.

Only recently had the young Jew arrived in the Holy Land, after a long and arduous journey from Yemen. Indeed, it was the fulfillment of his life's dream when he was finally able to kiss the holy soil and devote himself to the service of G-d in Jerusalem.

Shalom the shamash had been born in the city of Sharab, where his superior intellectual gifts were evident at an early age. Unfortunately, the premature death of his father prevented him from remaining in yeshiva, as the young orphan was now the sole support of his family. Shalom became a traveling merchant and plied his wares from door to door. This left him with only his evenings free to pursue his one true love: the study of Torah. He would often remain in the study hall till the wee hours of the morning before going home to catch a few hours of sleep.

But Shalom's thirst for Torah knowledge was insatiable. Despite his achievements, he still felt as if something were missing. It was then that he discovered the esoteric realm of Torah - the Kabala and its mysteries - as developed by the sages of Yemen. Enthusiastically he plunged into the study of the higher worlds and the Torah's secrets, and distinguished himself in this realm as well. But the young Rabbi Shalom insisted on working for a living, and continued to peddle his notions as before.

One time on a business expedition Shalom found himself in a very dangerous situation, and vowed that if G-d saved him, he would move to the Holy Land. Indeed, G-d came to his aid, and he left his friends and family and embarked on the long journey through the Middle East.

Shalom's joy knew no bounds when he finally arrived at the Beit Kel yeshiva in Jerusalem, headed by the famous Kabbalist Rabbi Gedalia Chiyun. His soul longed to join the other students of the inner aspects of Torah, but he had no wish to reveal his already extensive knowledge. Instead, he presented himself as a simple Jew and found employment as the sexton of the study hall.

It was a wonderful opportunity to learn without being observed. As a regular presence in the yeshiva, no one paid any attention to Shalom, who kept his eyes and ears open to every word. Thus he gradually increased his knowledge until he far surpassed everyone else. But his greatness remained a secret known only to him.

One day a question came up in the yeshiva that no one could answer. For days the Kabbalists consulted their heavy tomes, but could not come up with a satisfactory explanation. Rabbi Gedalia became almost obsessed with the problem, and was very perturbed by his inability to solve it.

The shamash had been listening to their deliberations and knew the answer. But not wishing to reveal himself, he remained silent. As the days progressed, it was as if a dark cloud hovered over the study hall.

One day Shalom came upon Rabbi Gedalia weeping over an open volume, begging and imploring G-d to illuminate his mind. It was impossible to ignore such a pitiful sight. Later that night, when the study hall was empty, Shalom wrote the answer on a small piece of paper and left it between the pages of Rabbi Gedalia's book.

The next morning the study hall was in an uproar. The problem that had appeared so difficult and complex had been solved in a clear and logical manner. Everyone was curious where the wonderful explanation had come from, but it remained a great mystery.

The strange phenomenon repeated itself several times. Whenever a difficult question was raised in the evening, its answer was found in Rabbi Gedalia's book the next morning. A thorough investigation was conducted, but the head of the yeshiva could not determine where the answers were coming from.

The riddle was solved in a totally unexpected manner, when Rabbi Gedalia's young daughter happened to mention that she had noticed the Yemenite sexton flipping through the pages of one of her father's books. In fact, she had noticed him doing so on several occasions. The next time an unresolved question was raised in the study hall the Rabbi made believe he was going home for the evening but hid in a closet. Indeed, to his utter shock, he observed the sexton consulting the holy tomes and secreting a piece of paper between the pages of his prayer book.

The next morning the head of the yeshiva insisted on seating Rabbi Shalom Sharabi at his right hand side, and revealed to all the great mystery. In fact, he later appointed him his heir and successor, despite his tender age of only 27.

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi's greatness was thus revealed to everyone in Jerusalem, and many stories are told about his wisdom. For 30 years he served as head of the Beit Kel yeshiva, until passing away in the year 5537 (1777).

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The Parshah of Tazria continues the discussion of the laws of tumah v'taharah, ritual impurity and purity.

A woman giving birth should undergo a process of purification, which includes immersing in a mikvah (a naturally gathered pool of water) and bringing offerings to the Holy Temple. All male infants are to be circumcised on the eighth day of life.

Tzaraat (often mistranslated as "leprosy") is a supernatural plague, which also can afflict garments. If white or pink patches appear on a person's skin (dark red or green in garments), a kohen is summoned. Judging by various signs, such as an increase in size of the afflicted area after a seven-day quarantine, the kohen pronounces it tamei (impure) or tahor (pure).

A person afflicted with tzaraat must dwell alone outside of the camp (or city) until he is healed. The afflicted area in a garment is removed; if the tzaraat spreads or recurs, the entire garment must be burned.

Parshas Metzora begins by detailing how the recovered metzora is purified by the kohen (priest) with a special procedure involving two birds, spring water in an earthen vessel, a piece of cedar wood, a scarlet thread and a bundle of hyssop.

A home can also be afflicted with tzaraat by the appearance of dark red or green patches on its walls. In a process lasting as long as nineteen days, a kohen determines if the house can be purified, or whether it must be demolished.

Ritual impurity is also engendered through a seminal or other discharge in a man, and menstruation or other discharge of blood in a woman, necessitating purification through immersion in a mikvah.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 28 - 29 April	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:19	6:16
Adelaide	5:18	6:14
Brisbane	5:01	5:54
Darwin	6:17	7:07
Gold Coast	4:59	5:52
Perth	5:24	6:18
Sydney	5:00	5:55
Canberra	5:06	6:02
Launceston	5:04	6:03
Auckland	5:21	6:18
Wellington	5:14	6:13
Hobart	5:01	6:01
Byron Bay	4:57	5:50

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TAZRIA - METZORA • 2 IYAR • 28 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.19 PM
	MINCHA:	5.25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.50 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.36 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.16 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.20 PM
	MAARIV:	6.05 PM