

LAMPLIGHTER

5 Iyar
Parshas
Tazria-Metzora
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Tazria and Metzora. In the second portion, One of the laws pertaining to the Biblical affliction of leprosy (discussed in this week's Torah portion, Metzora), seems somewhat surprising.

If a person discovered an eruption, a bright spot, or a white hair indicative of the disease on part of his body, he was pronounced "impure" by the priest. If, however, the leprosy covered his entire body, he was pronounced pure. "[If] it is all turned white, he is pure," the Torah repeats.

How can it be that when the leprosy is confined to one area, the person is impure, yet once it has spread all over his body, he is pure? There are two possible explanations:

The sole reason he is considered pure is because it is G-d's will. According to logic, the person whose leprosy covers all of his flesh should be impure; G-d, however, has decreed that he is pure.

The law itself is logical. When the leprosy appears on only a part of a person's skin, it is obvious that he is suffering from some sort of malady. If it covers all of his skin, it is indicative of the individual's constitution and nature, not symptomatic of a disease.

The Talmud cites this law in connection to the concept of redemption, using the affliction of leprosy as a metaphor for sin. "The son of David [Moshiach] will not come until all authority has become heretical," i.e., when G-dlessness is officially sanctioned and widespread throughout the world.

Here we may ask the same question raised regarding leprosy: If the world will be entirely dark, how will it be possible for the light of Redemption to shine through? Why will the Redemption occur precisely when evil is so powerful that it has overcome the entire world?

Again, the above two explanations may be applied to solve our dilemma:

There is no logic involved. Moshiach will come when he does only because G-d will have decreed it thus; the Redemption will occur independent of the world's condition. An all-powerful and eternal G-d can certainly bring Moshiach no matter how degraded and evil the world becomes.

The fact that evil is ascendent throughout the entire world is proof that something unusual is taking place; were this not so, some pockets of good would certainly have remained. Rather, the absolute supremacy of evil indicates that all the negative forces have become externalized, as they have already been fully vanquished from within.

Thus, the phenomenon of "all authority has become heretical" is actually part of the world's purification, a process of separating good from evil that will ultimately culminate with Moshiach's revelation. At that time, the world will be sufficiently prepared for the light of Redemption.

Four Reasons Why You Should Gossip

By Levi Avtzon

Reason #1:

The media and tabloids have taught us that it is our patriotic duty, enshrined in the "freedom of speech" clause of our Constitution, to shine a bright light on our neighbor's dirty laundry. No, there is no such thing as privacy; your life is my life, and your mistake is my appetizer. Of course, I must know why she got divorced from her third marriage, plus all the details on the custodial war between them regarding the two-year-old psycho in the middle.

In short: We spend most of our day learning from the media. And they are awesome teachers.

Reason #2:

You are G-d's warrior. And just as G-d cannot tolerate falsehood, so too you, as His fighter, have a moral obligation to search, find and publicize your fellow's secrets, so that he should not, heaven forbid, receive false respect and feel haughty.

In short: It's all in the name of G-d.

Reason #3:

It is a custom amongst families and communities, from way back when, that on many an occasion, especially around the dinner table, a human sacrifice is laid on the table/altar and slaughtered with verbal knives and daggers.

In short: We don't mess with tradition.

Reason #4:

Because you never heard this story:

Rabbi Shmuel, the fourth rebbe of Chabad, once overheard his two young sons, Zalman and Sholom, arguing in the yard. Upon investigation, he discovered that Zalman had pushed his younger brother into a ditch. "What is the meaning of this?" he asked the boy.

Zalman responded: "It's not fair. I am the older brother, so I should be taller, but Sholom is taller than me. So I pushed him down, and now I'm taller!"

Said his father: "My son, if you wish to be higher than your brother, why don't you climb on a chair instead of putting him in a pit?"

So, reason number four is: Why feel bad about the fact that you're not the best you could be? Why be bothered up about your faults? The easier way is to point out the negative of everyone else. After all, if he could do such a thing, then I'm not so bad after all.

In short: It's much easier to put down others than to climb up yourself.

So, to sum it up: Without gossip, the unemployment rate in the media industry will hit the roof. National boredom will result in anarchy. And, worst of all, people would become kinder, more honest, and the world would become a better place.

How awful.

Slice of LIFE

The Rebbe's Blessings

By Tzvi Jacobs

Esther and I were married for 2 1/2 years before we had our first baby. It often happens that couples have to wait a while, and our story would be more dramatic if we were married for 10 years or more without being able to have children. Still, our story is unusual.

We had heard many stories and even had friends who had trouble either conceiving or carrying a baby to term, and after receiving a blessing and sometimes also advice from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, they had at least one baby. With those stories in mind, I went to Crown Heights in September, 1988. It was a pleasant Sunday afternoon and hundreds of people were in a long line waiting to see the Rebbe.

A black limousine pulled up in front of the house, and I overheard that some politicians from New York were arriving. An official escorted them straight in to receive a blessing and seek the Rebbe's advice on an important political issue.

The line didn't move for about 30 minutes. I became unsure if I should ask the Rebbe for a blessing. Should I make the Rebbe, who had been fasting and standing all day and would continue to do so until he met and blessed the final person who got in line, stand and fast for even five seconds longer?

As I looked back at the rapidly growing line, I spotted one of my Yeshiva teachers. "Should I ask the Rebbe for a blessing for a baby?" I asked.

"Sure you should ask," he answered me, erasing all my doubts.

The line started moving. My heart started beating harder. The Rebbe is

an awesome figure. He is a man, but people say the Rebbe has the superhuman ability to see into anyone's soul, even someone on the other side of the globe who has never seen or even heard about the Rebbe.

Finally, I made it into the Rebbe's home. The line was moving quickly. It was my turn. "Blessing for baby," I blurted out nervously. "Amen. In a good and auspicious time," the Rebbe said. He spoke with a clear, strong voice while handing me a second dollar bill.

By December Esther was suspicious. She went to the doctor and the results were positive. We were pregnant. We were ecstatic. But about a week later, the nurse told us the fetal protein level was high and they wanted to do an amniocentesis to find out more and, if need be, G-d forbid, recommend an abortion. But Judaism does not allow for abortions for such reasons. The doctor's staff was pushing for the amniocentesis, but we called back and said, "No thanks."

Only then did I find out that high fetal protein was indicative of Down's syndrome. I didn't tell Esther immediately what I had found out. The following evening we went to Crown Heights for a friend's wedding and I broke down and told Esther. We were both crying.

The "siren" sounded meaning that the Rebbe was going to say a short public discourse after which the Rebbe gave out dollars for people to give to charity. We got into the line. I couldn't say anything to the Rebbe. I tried to believe that all this was a test from G-d and that it was really a big blessing. I would have to write a letter to the Rebbe. Esther had gone through the women's line and was already waiting for me in the car.

"The Rebbe said, 'Mazal tov' to me," Esther said. "How did he know that I'm pregnant?"

"I thought the Rebbe says 'mazal tov' only after a baby is born," I said.

"I know. I was starting to doubt that I heard him right. And then when I got into the car I saw was the back cover of this magazine."

It was a picture of a pregnant woman headlined, "Saying mazal tov is not enough." The advertisement then explained that a pregnant woman should have the "shir hama'alos" card in the delivery room, as a protection against any harm to the mother or newborn baby. It's a custom from Kabala and strongly encouraged by the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

"Everything is going to be all right, Esti," I said. The Rebbe saying "mazal tov" calmed us down a lot. We just had normal worries and fears throughout the rest of the pregnancy. On Sunday night, May 9, Esther went into labor. At about 20 past midnight we drove to the Morristown hospital and went straight to maternity. At 12:55 a.m. the nurse called out, "Congratulations! It's a girl. A beautiful baby girl."

By the way, you can be sure that when we went into that delivery room, we had our "shir hama'alos--saying 'mazal tov' is not enough" cards--one for the mother, one for the baby, and a spare for the expectant father.

Esther was so happy and thankful to be a mother--and to have such a healthy, adorable baby--that she wrote a thank-you note to the Rebbe about four months after Chaya Mushka Bracha was born. While writing the letter, Esther saw a friend walk past. She was still childless. So Esther added a note at the end of her letter: "May the Rebbe please give Leah bas Sara a blessing to have a baby."

Our Sages teach that when you pray for someone else, G-d blesses the one who prayed for his fellow first. Three months later both Esther and her friend were expecting. Our Nechama Dina was born within two weeks of Leah's baby.

I hope that this one little story gives you some insight into who the Rebbe is.

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Yeshiva or College?

By the Grace of G-d
4th of Adar I, 5719 [February 12, 1959]
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of January 19th, in which you write that, inasmuch as about two years ago I expressed my opinion that your son . . . should devote at least a period of two years exclusively to the study of the Torah, which I considered especially essential for his happiness, and inasmuch as this coming summer this period will be fulfilled, you bring it to my attention. I assume that you are referring to my letter of the 28th of Sivan, 5717.

No doubt you will note that I wrote there that in my opinion this period of study is considered absolutely essential, and that I said "At least two years." This, of course, did not mean that at the end of the two years your son must necessarily go to college. Nor did I, of course, imply that college is the only solution to your son's future.

I also need hardly say that I do not go back on my word, and although you state in your letter that you expect me to honor my promise, I do not see what promise I made in my said letter, except that after the two years of exclusive study of the Torah, your son would be much better prepared to cope with any contingencies which his future life may present to him, as to anyone who goes out in the world, especially a Jew.

As for the question itself regarding your son's registering in college, needless to say that the decision whether or not to enter college will have to be made by your son. I can only suggest that it may be advisable that your son, as well as you, should consult with the administration of the Yeshiva in Montreal where your son is learning at present, and who know your son intimately and the progress he has made, and what are his future prospects, etc. I may add that from the general information which has reached me, I understand that your son has become successful in his studies and, what is not less and even more important, that being in the Yeshiva atmosphere, his general character and self-assurance have been strengthened. After consultation with the Yeshiva administration, it will be easier for you to make a decision as to what your son should do in the future.

Let me conclude again in the same vein as I wrote to you in my above-mentioned letter, and with even greater conviction at this time, that your son's Torah study will certainly bring him true happiness, and that you will have much Nachas from him, and may G-d grant that you enjoy this in good health and happy frame of mind.
With blessing,

A WORD

from the Director

Connecting Passover and the Holiday of Shavuot is the period known as sefira. We count the days of the Omer starting on the second day of Passover - our day of liberation from slavery. We continue counting for 49 days until the day on which we commemorate the receiving of the Torah - the culmination of our liberation.

What, we might ask, is the point of counting days, measuring time? Time just marches on. We can all march to the beat of a different drummer, but we can't actually change time, can we?

Quantitatively, time cannot be changed. But, we learn from sefira, that qualitatively, time can be changed. Time is like a container. We can fill it with nothingness by wasting it away, or, we can fill it with meaningful activities.

In the days between Passover and Shavuot, we are preparing for the receiving of the Torah. During this preparation period, we should make sure to fill our time "container" with meaningful accomplishments.

In this way, we will actually be able to "stretch" time. By instilling our actions in the here and now with Jewish content, we fill our limited time with infinite and eternal acts. We transfer and elevate our own time beyond and above time.

Every day when we count the Omer, we are reminded to fill our time with the mitzvot that need to be attended to on particular day and not push them off for another time. In doing so, we will certainly hasten the Redemption and bring Moshiach, NOW!

J. I. Gutterman

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Is There a Jewish Superstition Not to Go Barefoot?

Question: *My grandmother always told me not to walk around the house in just socks and no shoes. Is there anything to this or is it an old wives tale?*

Answer: There is no law that forbids you to walk around in socks. But our sages teach us to never ignore the sayings of our grandmothers, for there is always some wisdom in them. Indeed, your grandmother's aversion to shoelessness does have some basis.

Jewish law states that one who is mourning the loss of a loved one removes their shoes. Thus walking around in socks makes you look like a mourner, and we don't even want to look like a mourner. This is part of a general Jewish attitude to death. We don't like it. We do whatever we can to stay away from it.

There are many Jewish customs that stem from the desire to avoid anything associated with death. Some people don't sleep with their feet facing the door, because that is how a corpse lies before burial. We don't speak about what will happen when someone dies, but rather what will happen "after 120 years." We wash our hands after attending a funeral, to rid ourselves of the impurity of the cemetery.

This dislike of death is not so much a superstition as an allergy. Our tradition trains us to love life and be allergic to death. Unlike some traditions that venerate death as an ideal and view life as a wretched curse, the Jewish tradition cherishes life as a blessing. Through customs that distance us from death and its trappings, the Jewish people has inculcated a worldview that is life-affirming and this-world focused.

Your grandmother had a point. Death is a part of life. But it need not be given any more space than necessary. Keep your shoes on.

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Who Is the True Sinner?

Rabbi Yaakov Kaidaner, author of Sippurim Nora'im, recalls a meeting at a fair in the city of Königsberg. Jewish merchants from all over Poland, Lithuania, and Russia had gathered. They had time on their hands and began discussing the chassidic movement and its leaders.

Among the assembled were a group of learned men from the city of Slutsk, Belorussia, known as a stronghold of staunch opposition to the chassidic movement.

When the conversation turned to Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, who had succeeded the Baal Shem Tov as the leader of chassidim, the merchants from Slutsk shared the following story:

It happened once that a young man from Slutsk traveled to Volhynia on business. It was a cold, wintry day, and he suddenly found himself in unfamiliar territory. Freezing and scared, he continued to wander deep into the night. It was well after midnight when he finally arrived at the town of Mezritch.

He drove down the silent, snow-covered streets, looking for a place to warm himself and rest his weary bones. Suddenly, he saw a candle flickering in a window. Unbeknownst to the young merchant, it was the home of Rabbi Dov Ber.

Excited to find a place to rest, he knocked on the door and was soon admitted into Rabbi Dov Ber's sparsely furnished home. Hearing that there was a visitor, Rabbi Dov Ber (who had been studying by candlelight) came to see who had arrived.

In response to the rabbi's warm greeting and inquiry, the young merchant introduced himself as an aspiring businessman from Slutsk who had lost his way.

"It was not for naught that you lost your way and arrived at my house," replied Rabbi Dov Ber. "Oh no, if G-d arranged that you find yourself here, there is a purpose."

He then put on his spectacles (as he was wont to do when peering deeply into the spiritual worlds) and asked, "When you left home, was your son ill?"

"Yes, he was," said the astonished merchant.

"You have nothing to worry about," said the rabbi reassuringly. "He has recovered and is doing fine, thank G-d."

"When you go home," Rabbi Dov Ber continued, "you will hear that there is a terrible illness in the city and that children are falling ill and dying, may G-d shield us. In response to the tragedy, the rabbi and Torah sages of the city will investigate the actions of the townspeople to try to determine whose sin caused the terrible tragedy.

"On the day following your arrival, one of the rich men of the

town will hold a celebration for his son's circumcision, and you will be invited. There, the elders of the city will speak about the plague and people will accuse a certain young man of being the cause of the evil. In truth, this young man is completely innocent and he will try to defend himself. In fact, one of the leaders of the accusation—a respected man in the city—is the one who has sinned, and it is he who is the reason for the plague.

"Things will get so bad that the people will begin to strike the hapless young man. When the rich leader (whom you know to be a sinner) will raise his hand to hit the poor man, you must grab his hand and tell him, 'Evil one, admit your wrongdoing. You are the sinner, and you are the cause of the death that has come to our city.' He will then admit his sins, and the plague will subside.

"Know," concluded the rabbi, "that if you do not follow my instructions, your own son will die a terrible death."

The following morning, the merchant continued on his way. Upon arriving home, he learned that everything was exactly as Rabbi Dov Ber had foretold. His son had recovered, and other children were ill. At the circumcision, an innocent man was accused, he confronted the true sinner, and the plague dissipated.

The entire town was abuzz, continued the men from Slutsk. They wondered, "Can there be such a holy man of G-d among us, through whom G-d Himself speaks?"

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 20 - 21 April	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:29	6:25
Adelaide	5:28	6:23
Brisbane	5:08	6:01
Darwin	6:21	7:10
Gold Coast	5:06	5:59
Perth	5:32	6:26
Sydney	5:09	6:03
Canberra	5:15	6:11
Launceston	5:16	6:14
Auckland	5:31	6:27
Wellington	5:25	6:23
Hobart	5:13	6:12
Byron Bay	5:05	5:57

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORA • 5 IYAR • 20 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	5.35 PM
	MAARIV	6.05 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.33 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.25 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.30 PM
	MAARIV	6.15 PM