

LampLighter

26 Adar II
Tazria
Hachodesh
976
1 April
5771/2011

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The name of a Torah portion is indicative of its contents and theme. The name of this week's reading, Tazria (literally "when [she] shall conceive") is therefore surprising at first glance, as the entire portion deals with the affliction of leprosy rather than conception and birth. In fact, the Biblical plague of leprosy was the most severe form of spiritual uncleanness, leading our Sages to declare, "The leper is considered as if dead."

Tazria, however, is an allusion to the positive, inner purpose of all the afflictions and punishments that are prescribed in the Torah, as will be explained:

G-d is the epitome of goodness and loving-kindness. He doesn't punish anyone for the sake of being punitive. His sole intention is to refine and purify the person, to remove the "shell" that was created by his sins, and to elevate him to a higher level. All of the Torah's punishments, even the most stringent, are for the ultimate good of the recipient.

This is also the inner intention of the Biblical plague of leprosy (tzara'at), as distinguished from the modern day illness known as Hansen's Disease. As Maimonides explains, the physical manifestations of tzara'at were miraculous in nature, and were visited on an individual for the sin of lashon hara (gossip). "The first symptoms would appear on a person's house; if he repented, the house would be purified. If he persisted in his wickedness until the house was destroyed, the leather garments in his house would begin to change... If he persisted in his wickedness until they had to be burned, the clothing he wore would be afflicted." It was only if a person did not return to G-d after all these warnings that any symptoms of tzara'at would appear on his body.

Once this happened, the afflicted person had to temporarily leave the rest of society and dwell in isolation. The purpose of this period of separation and reflection was to transform the former sinner into a new entity, one that was purified and refined.

The name of the Torah portion, Tazria, thus reveals the true objective of all the Biblical plagues: the "birth" of a new being, a purer and holier Jew.

This is also the inner meaning of the Jewish people's exile. During the exile, we "sow" mitzvot and good deeds that they may "grow" and flourish when Moshiach comes. The reward we will receive in the Messianic era will not be dissociated from our present service; on the contrary, it will be the natural outgrowth of all the "seeds" we are planting now.

May we merit to see this immediately.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall

By Mordechai Wollenberg

This week's Torah portion speaks about various physical blemishes and conditions which can afflict a person.

The Talmud, in the tractate *Negaim* which deals with these types of blemishes and conditions, notes that "a person sees all kinds of blemishes except for their own."

The story is told of a prominent doctor who was known for his generosity but was also prone to blowing his own trumpet.

One day he was travelling when he saw the local rabbi walking. He stopped to offer the rabbi a ride. As they travelled together, the doctor, as was his wont, began to speak about his achievements. "You know, Rabbi, I get a lot of patients who can't afford to pay but I never turn them away. I treat them exactly the same as my wealthier patients."

"I also do that," replied the rabbi.

The doctor figured that perhaps the rabbi was referring to the spiritual counsel he gave his spiritual "patients." "Also," he continued, "a lot of times patients need expensive drugs. If they can't afford it, I provide them for free."

"I also do that," rejoined the rabbi.

Maybe he means that sometimes he gives people material help also, the doctor thought. "Sometimes people need days of post-operative care. I give it to them voluntarily, even though I have so little time."

"I also do that."

So it went, the doctor continuing to lavish praise on himself while the rabbi answered each time, "I also do that."

Eventually the doctor couldn't take it anymore and he asked the rabbi: "Rabbi, I don't understand. You're not a doctor, how can you do all these things?"

"No, all I meant was I also do that - I also only talk about my own good qualities!"

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic movement, taught us that another person is like a mirror—if we find ourselves noticing faults in others, it is because they exist within ourselves. This is not such a foreign concept—it is common in psychological terms to speak of one person "projecting" their own faults onto another. It is incumbent upon us to realize that when we see a fault in somebody else, it is only because we need to work on that very fault within ourselves. As the Talmud and the above story illustrate, we tend not to notice our own faults except in others!

The whole world is a mirror designed to show us how we can work on ourselves and our own deficiencies. Once we realize this, and we understand that the fault we see in another person is just the way in which Divine Providence shows us our own shortcomings, it becomes a lot easier to be tolerant and understanding of others.



An Almost Unique Heirloom

As told by Moshe Kormornick

During the Holocaust, a large group of Jewish women were rounded up in Poland to be sent to the gas chambers. As the group gathered their possessions to take with them into the camp, the Nazi officers called out to all the villagers who were standing by watching, "Anything that these Jews leave behind you may take for yourselves, because for sure they will not be coming back to collect them!"

Two Polish women who were standing nearby saw a woman towards the back of the group, wearing a large, heavy, expensive coat. Not wanting to wait to see if others got the coat before them, they ran to the woman and knocked her to the ground, grabbed her coat and walked away.

As the Jewish women were being led away, these two Polish women lay down the coat to divide the spoils of what was hiding inside. As they rummaged through the pockets, they discovered gold jewellery, silver candlesticks and other heirlooms. They were quite pleased, but still, as they lifted the coat it seemed heavier than it should be. After further inspection they found a secret pocket, and hidden inside the coat was a little baby girl!

Shocked at their discovery, one of the women insisted to the other, "I don't have any children, and I'm too old to give birth now. You take all the

gold and silver and let me take the baby". The deal was agreed and the Polish woman took her new 'daughter' home to her delighted husband. They raised the Jewish girl as their own, treating her very well, but never told her anything of her history. The girl excelled in her studies and became a successful paediatrician, working in the top hospital in Poland.

After some years the girl's 'mother' passed away. A week later, she heard a knock at the door. An old woman invited herself in and said "I want you to know that the woman that passed away last week was not your real mother..." and she proceeded to tell her the whole story. The girl did not believe her at first, but the old woman said to her, "When we found you, you were wearing a beautiful gold pendant with strange writing on it which must be Hebrew. I am sure that your mother kept the necklace, go and look." And with that parting advice she left.

The girl went into her 'mother's' jewellery box and found the necklace just as the woman described. She had it extended and wore it every day, but thought nothing more of her Jewish roots.

Sometime later, she went on holiday abroad and saw two Chabad-Lubavitch boys on the main street, trying to interest Jewish passersby to wrap tefilin (the males) or accept Shabbat candles (the females). Seizing the opportunity, she told them her entire story and showed them the necklace. The boys confirmed that a Jewish name was inscribed on the necklace but did not know what to say about her status. They recommended that she send a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe explaining everything.

She took their advice and sent off a letter that same day. She received a speedy reply saying that it is clear

from the facts that she is a Jewish girl and that since she had a special talent, she should use her invaluable skills in Israel, a place in desperate need of talented paediatricians.

She took the Rebbe's advice and moved to Israel. There she consulted the Beit Din (Rabbinical Court) who declared her Jewish. She was accepted into a hospital to work, and eventually met her husband and raised a family.

Some years later, when there was a terrorist attack at the Subarro cafe in the centre of Jerusalem in August 2001, this woman was walking nearby with her husband. She told her husband to return home to the kids and she proceeded to rush to the scene where she helped to treat the wounded and get the injured into ambulances and to hospitals.

When she herself arrived at the hospital she met an elderly man who was in a state of shock. He was searching everywhere for his granddaughter who had become separated from him. She calmed him down and went with him to search amongst all the patients in order to find his granddaughter. Asking how she could recognize her, the frantic grandfather gave a rough description of a gold pendant necklace that she was wearing. After searching amongst the injured, they finally found the granddaughter who was wearing the necklace.

At the sight of this necklace, the paediatrician froze. She turned to the old man and said, "Where did you buy this necklace?"

"You can't buy such a necklace" he responded, "I am a goldsmith and I made this necklace. Actually I made two identical ones for each of my daughters. This is my granddaughter from one of them, and my other daughter did not survive the war."

...And this is how the Jewish girl was reunited with her father.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 976

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"I shall return the captivity of My people Israel and they shall build the waste cities and settle... I shall plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked out of their land that I have given them," says G-d your G-d." (The Prophet Amos, 9:14-15)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



1st day of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5712 [1952]

Greetings and Blessings!

Your letter ... reached me on time, but my reply has been delayed because of the *yahrzeit* (anniversary of the passing) of my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe - the preparations for that date, and the matters connected with it and arising out of it. May G-d help every one of us to fulfil his mission along the path that my saintly father-in-law pointed out and laid down. This also includes guidance along the path of Torah and mitzvos (commandments) itself, because even within that path itself, the Evil Inclination finds ways of weakening and hindering a person's endeavours to climb ever higher.

I was happy to read in your letter that you are firm in your trust in G-d, and I hope that you will soon be enabled to see that trust materialize in your business affairs.

One thing, however, I find surprising. Since you place your trust in G-d in questions of materiality and your livelihood, surely that trust should be firm when it comes to one's children and their conduct! After all, this is what really matters to a Jew, much more than material concerns. But in your case, when you come to that subject, you write that you console yourself with the thought that at least they are in a better state than some others, and so on.

On the phrase, *bashamayim mima'al v'al ha'aretz mitachas* - "in the Heavens above, and on the earth below" - there is a [popular] interpretation which is cited in many books and which you have no doubt heard: When it comes to matters of Heaven, i.e., Divine and holy matters, one should gaze upward towards those who are standing on a rung that is above one's own and try to climb up there; when it comes to earthly matters, one should lower one's glance and consider the predicament of those whose status is below one's own.

The latter perspective enables a man to become a *sameiach bechelko* - "one who is happy with his lot." And such a man is truly rich. As the Sages teach, "Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot."

Now, there is no need for me to emphasize that Lubavitch in general, and I personally, are not in the habit of offering pointless rebuke. The above lines, then, express a dual intent: (a) to contribute whatever I can to the strength of your trust that G-d will grant you a livelihood and sound health, and (b) to recapitulate what I spoke of when you were here - not to grow weary of speaking with your children concerning their conduct in matters of Torah and mitzvos. And "the words of the wise," especially when they are expressed "tranquilly, are heeded."

With a blessing that you write me good tidings.

1 Shvat, 5718 [1958]

Greetings and Blessings!

...You have no doubt heard the teaching of the Rebbe Maharash, the grandfather of my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe: "People say that if you can't make your way from below, you should climb over the top - but I hold that right from the outset you should leap over the top."

Now, this approach applies to the present subject. At first sight it would appear that manifest joy should wait until one's health improves in actual fact. However, in the spirit of the above teaching, it could be suggested that rejoicing over this improvement should be advanced ahead of time, even though the improvement is not yet manifest.

Indeed, this itself will hasten the process. As has been repeatedly cited in the name of the [earlier] Rebbes of Chabad, "Think positively, and things will be positive." And how much more does this assurance apply when one translates positive thoughts into joyful words and joyful actions. This is especially relevant to yourself, whose literary skills equip you to influence many people in this direction - and the reward of those who gladden people's hearts is well known (Taanis 22a).

[...] With blessings for good news.

Translated by Rabbi Uri Kaploun. Reprinted from *In Good Hands*, published by *Sichos in English*.

Beginning this Tuesday, Rosh Chodesh Nissan (April 5th) and continuing through Nissan 13, we recite the verses (from Numbers ch. 7) describing the offerings made by the "princes" (Nesi'im) of the 12 tribes of Israel, starting with reading of the gift brought by Nachshon ben Aminadav, the Nasi of the tribe of Judah, on this date. Wednesday we read about Issachar's gift, and so on for the 12 tribes. On the 13th of Nissan we read G-d's instructions to Aaron regarding the kindling of the menorah, which represents the participation of the priestly tribe of Levi.

Following the verses of the day's "Nasi," we recite a short prayer in which we say, "...if I, Your servant, am from the tribe of ___ whose section of the Nasi I have read today in Your Torah, may all the holy sparks and holy illuminations that are included within the holiness of this tribe shine upon me, to grant me understanding and intelligence in Your Torah and my awe of You, to do Your will all the days of my life..."

A WORD from the Director

This week's parsha deals with an unusual skin disease called tzara'at—mistakenly translated as leprosy—which, according to our Sages, resulted from a person speaking ill of others—Lashon Hara.

Slander comes in two forms: The first is where one focuses on a superficial defect of another; in effect, ignoring his or her positive qualities that overshadow the mild external flaw. Talking about the other's superficial faults can actually cause them to become exaggerated and internalized.

The second is a reverse form. The slanderer exposes some actual flaw in the other that may have been embedded in his or her soul, hidden from view. By speaking ill of another, one can actually cause that dormant flaw to be activated and come to the surface.

There are also two corresponding ways of saying positive things about another:

When one sees a person whose outer appearance does not warrant praise, one must probe beneath the surface to find their inner good. The Ba'al Shem Tov compared the Jew to the earth that contains hidden treasures.

Conversely, one must also make an effort to value the superficial qualities of another. This helps to reinforce them, to the point where they become internalized.

The Talmud refers to Moshiach as one who is afflicted with tzara'at. This metaphor applied to Moshiach points to his role at touching and exposing both the internal and external nature of each and every person. Moshiach will inspire us to deepen and internalize the superficial positive qualities that we have and he will enable us to reveal our latent spiritual treasures.

To get out of our national as well as individual exile we must employ this two pronged approach of exposing our inner beauty and holiness on the one hand, as well as cultivating and exercising those positive attributes that are only skin deep, on the other hand. By promoting repeated performances of the Mitzvot, which are external acts, the surface holiness begins to seep through the "pores in the skin" and becomes an integral part of our being. This brings about both individual as well as collective Redemption of the Jewish people and of the entire world.

J.I. Gutnick

It Happened Once...



A chassid decided to visit his rebbe. It was a long trip to the town where his rebbe lived, and he had to spend a night at an inn. Fortunately many guesthouses in Eastern Europe were run by Jews, so Jewish travellers could always get kosher food and hear the latest news.

The chassid arrived early at the inn and he ate his supper with the other travellers. They discussed matters of Torah, and they were happy that such a learned chassid had joined them. They also talked about what was going on in the towns they came from, they spoke about trade and about their families, as travellers love to do.

The next morning the chassid got up and prayed the morning prayers together with the other guests. But to the chassid's ear, their prayers sounded mumbled, unclear and incomprehensible like water rushing over pebbles in a very swift brook. So after the prayers were finished, he went over to one of the guests and said very quickly in a soft, murmuring voice: "Werurygoigtdy?"

"Excuse me, what did you just ask?" answered the puzzled man. The Chassid repeated: "Wurarygongtdayisd?" The man looked at him. "I am sorry, but I still do not understand your question!" "Of course you don't!" retorted the chassid, "I said, 'Where are you going today?' but I said it just as quickly and as garbled as you mumbled the words of your prayers..."

"Yesterday," the chassid continued his admonishment, "when we all sat around the table talking about what's going on in the world, I was able to understand every word of the conversation. But this morning, all I heard were incomprehensible sounds. Is this how you talk to the King of Kings, to G-d, the Ruler of the World?"

The man understood what the chassid meant to say, he hung his head and he apologized. All the travellers stood in a circle around the chassid, they heard his words, and they promised from then on to pray in a different way, to pay attention, and to pronounce the words clearly and with the right intentions, even if they didn't always understand all the Hebrew words, because not everybody is a scholar. They assured the chassid that they would do their best, and they thanked him for his simple but profound lesson. Then they ate breakfast and left the inn, each to his destination.

The chassid made a meaningful visit to his rebbe. On his way home his heart was light. He was happy because he would soon see his dear wife and his little son, whom he had missed.

When he opened the door of his house, he greeted his wife warmly and went straight to the crib of his son. The baby stretched out his pudgy little arms and gurgled: "Gooaaghgoogoo". "Ah, my little boy," said the chassid's wife, "you want some milk! Come!" And she took him on her arm and went to the kitchen.

The chassid was amazed. "How did you know what he wanted? those *googhahgooh*sounds are all the same to me!" "But not to me," said the mother of the little boy with a smile. "I am with him day and

night, so I know exactly what he means with his different *gooh's* and *gaah's* and what he wants..."

"You know," she continued to muse aloud, "I thought about this when I was praying. G-d knows what we, His children, want from Him, even if our speech is not perfect, or we do not know Hebrew well enough, or we do not always understand what we pray, as long as we pray sincerely..."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

When a woman conceives and gives birth. (Lev. 12:2)

The potential contained within a seed is virtually limitless. When properly nurtured, a seed will develop into a mature tree, which, in turn, will yield more seeds with the potential for growth and regeneration. Our service of G-d must be performed in a similar manner. A good deed must not be self-limiting; a Jew must always strive to ensure that his actions have far-reaching effects, bearing fruit in the next generation as well. (*Likrat Shabbat, #22*)

And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. (Lev. 12:3)

What does the mitzva (commandment) of brit mila - circumcision - emphasize? Brit mila draws attention to the fact that G-d did not create man in a perfect state from the womb. Just as perfection of man's physical form is by man's own hand, so is it within his means and power to complete his spiritual form by the worthiness of his actions. We learn from this mitzva that through our actions we have the opportunity to perfect ourselves and the entire world both physically and spiritually. (*Sefer HaChinunch*)

At a brit mila we say, "Just as he has entered into the Covenant so may he enter into Torah, into marriage and into good deeds." It is a Chabad Chasidic custom to make an advance payment on the tuition fees for the child's Jewish education at this time. (*Hayom Yom*)

When a woman conceives and gives birth... (Lev. 12:2)

This Torah portion is immediately preceded by the words "to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten," to teach that keeping kosher has a direct effect upon the spirituality of future generations. (*Nachmanides*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS TAZRIA • 27 ADAR II • 2 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	6:57 PM
	MINCHA:	7:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:40 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:29 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR THE MONTH OF NISSAN: SUNDAY APRIL 3 2011:	12:44 AND 8 CHALAKIM PM
	MINCHA:	7:00 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHABBOS ENDS:	7:53 PM
	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:10 PM
	MAARIV:	7:55 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 1 APRIL 2011

Begins	Ends
6:57	7:53
6:54	7:48
5:29	6:20
6:33	7:21
5:27	6:19
5:56	6:49
6:34	7:28
6:42	7:36
6:47	7:44
6:59	7:54
6:57	7:54



Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.