



7 - 13 April, 2019  
2 - 8 Nissan, 5779

**Torah:**

Leviticus 14:1 - 15:33

**Haftorah:**

Kings II 7:3-20

■ **CALENDARS**

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

■ **FAMILY PROGRAMS**

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ **GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH**

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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## SHABBAT HAGADOL

The Shabbat before Passover is termed Shabbat HaGadol (“The Great Shabbat”) in commemoration of the “great miracle” that happened in Egypt on this day, heralding the Exodus from Egypt five days later.

Shabbat HaGadol customs include reading a portion of the Haggadah (from “Avadim hayinu...” to “...al kol avonotainu”), which tells the story of the Exodus; it is also customary that the rabbi of the community delivers a lecture in which he elaborates on the laws of Passover and their significance, in preparation for the festival.

## CLOUDS, CURSES AND CONCEALED COMPASSION

Does every cloud really have a silver lining? Is there a blessing in disguise inside every curse? Well, admittedly, it isn't always so easy to discern, but we most certainly do believe in the concept.

This week's Torah reading deals with the purification of those afflicted by the strange leprosy-like malady known as tzara'as (a word uncannily similar to tzores!). The Parshah recounts different types of tzara'as manifestations—on a person's body, in his clothes or even in the walls of his house. In the latter case, if after the necessary quarantine period the stain had still not receded, the stones of the affected wall

would have to be removed and replaced with new ones.

Now imagine the walls of your house being demolished. Is that a blessing or a curse? No doubt, the homeowner in question would not feel himself particularly blessed. But, according to our sages, the case was often different for the Israelites living in the Holy Land. The previous Canaanite inhabitants of the land would bury their treasures inside the very walls of their homes. The only way an Israelite would ever discover those hidden valuables was if the stones of the house would be removed. When this happened, it didn't take long for the poor unfortunate tzara'as-afflicted homeowner to be transformed into the wealthy heir of a newfound fortune. Suddenly his dark cloud was filled with linings of silver, gold and all kinds of precious objects. For him, in a moment, the curse became blessing.

Some time ago, a friend's business went into liquidation. Naturally, he was absolutely devastated. After a while he opened a new business which, thank G-d, prospered. He later confessed to me that in retrospect he was able to see how the earlier bankruptcy was truly a blessing. I still remember his words: “Before we were working for the banks; now we are working for our families.”

A woman in my congregation was suffering from heart disease, and the doctors said she needed bypass surgery. But she also had other medical complications which made a heart operation too dangerous to contemplate.

## Parshat Metzora

Her quality of life was very poor. If she went for a walk, she would have to stop and rest every few minutes. Then, one day, she suffered a heart attack. She was rushed to the hospital and the doctors said her only chance of survival was an emergency bypass operation. There was a 50/50 chance of success, but if they didn't do it she had no chance at all. They performed the surgery and, thank G-d, she made a full recovery, enjoying many years of greatly improved quality of life with nachas from children and grandchildren. For years she would joke, “Thank G-d I had a heart attack. I got my bypass!” It was no joke.

It would be naïve to suggest that it always works out this way. Life isn't so simple, and sometimes it takes much longer to see the good that is hidden in the traumas and difficulties of life. But we will continue to believe that G-d is good, that He really does want the best for us, and that one day, with hindsight, we will see how each of our frustrations did somehow serve us well in the long term.

All of us will at one time or another experience disappointments in life. The challenge is to learn from those disappointments and grow from them. Who knows if the wiser, more sensitive person we become is not the silver lining itself?

In general, there are two qualities which form a powerful combination to help us appreciate that there is a hidden goodness inside every misfortune: faith and patience. With faith that there is a higher, better purpose to life,

and with patience to bide our time for its revelation, we will be able to persevere and weather the crises of life.

Please G-d, may we all find our silver linings soon.

*By Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

## ON RABBIS AND JEWS

Without going into the whole question of sacrifices, one difficult phrase that appears in this week's reading, and throughout the early chapters of Vayikra (Leviticus), is *reiaich nichoach la-Hashem*—"a satisfying aroma to G-d." Why the repeated emphasis on satisfying G-d?

Some have suggested that with all the pageantry associated with the Temple rites and rituals, people might come to place undue importance on the kohanim and their ceremonials. The ritual directors might become so prominent in people's eyes that they would forget about the Almighty. It was therefore necessary to remind worshippers to Whom they ought to be directing their offerings, thoughts and prayers.

to advise and to guide. The rabbi will be happy to help and do whatever he can; but remember that, ultimately, we have to help ourselves, and each of us can turn to the single most important address in the universe—and that is G-d.

Rabbis may be very reliable, but don't rely on the rabbis. Kohanim, Levites, rabbis and teachers all have their important roles to play. But never confuse the messenger with the One who sent him. Long ago, our sages taught (and it has even become a popular Israeli bumper sticker): "We have no one to turn to but our Father in Heaven."

## PASSOVER (Important)

Passover falls unusually late this calendar year, given that the Jewish calendar year is a leap year. This being the case, we are not permitted to eat the Matzoh and read the Hagadah before 8:40 PM.

If your institution is not permitting a seder at that time, please be sure to take Matzoh and a Hagadah to your housing unit so you can eat and read at the appropriate time.

We have sent every institution Shemurah Matzoh. Please (preferably) take the Shemurah Matzoh for the seder nights.

## 'NASI' OF THE DAY

Beginning from the first day of Nissan 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 (see "Mishkan inaugurated"). Nissan 1, we read of the gift bought by Nachshon ben Aminadav, the nasi of the tribe of Judah, on this date. Nissan 2 we read of 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...."

## In Jewish History

**Sunday, 2 Nissan, 5779 - April 7, 2019**

**First Red Heifer Prepared (1312 BCE)**

On the 2nd of Nissan, one day after the inauguration of the Tabernacle, Moses prepared the very first Red Heifer, in order to ritually purify the Jewish nation in preparation for the bringing of the Paschal Lamb in the newly erected Sanctuary.

**Passing of Rashab (1920)**

The fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneersohn ("Rashab"), was born in the White Russian town of Lubavitch in 1860. After the passing of his father, Rabbi Shmuel (in 1882), he assumed the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch.

Famed for his phenomenal mind and analytical treatment of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Sholom DovBer wrote and delivered some 2,000 *maamarim* (discourses of Chassidic teaching) over the 38 years of his leadership. In 1897, he established the *Tomchei Temimim yeshivah*, the first institution of Jewish learning to combine the study of the "body" of Torah (Talmudic and legal studies) with its mystical "soul" (the teachings of Chassidism); it was this unique yeshivah that produced the army of learned, inspired and devoted Chassidim who, in the decades to come, would literally give their lives to keep Judaism alive under Soviet rule.

In 1915, Rabbi Sholom DovBer was forced to flee Lubavitch from the advancing WWI front and relocated to the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don. In his final years, he began the heroic battle against the new Communist regime's efforts to destroy the Jewish faith throughout the Soviet Union.

Rabbi Sholom DovBer passed away in Rostov on the 2nd of Nissan, 1920. His last words were: "I'm going to heaven; I leave you the writings."

**Wednesday, 5 Nissan, 5779 - April 10, 2019**  
**Spies to Jericho (1273 BCE)**

Two days before the conclusion of the thirty-day mourning period following the passing of Moses on Adar 7 (see Jewish History for the 7th of Nissan), Joshua dispatched two scouts--Caleb and Pinchas--across the Jordan River to Jericho, to gather intelligence in preparation of the Israelites' battle with the first city in their conquest of the Holy Land. In Jericho, they were assisted and hidden by Rahab, a woman who lived inside the city walls. (Rahab later married Joshua).

**Friday, 7 Nissan, 5779 - April 12, 2019**  
**Jews Prepare to Enter Canaan (1273 BCE)**

The Jewish nation mourned for thirty days following the passing of Moses. (During this time, Joshua, the new leader of the Jewish nation, sent scouts to spy on the land of Canaan, see Jewish History for the 5th of Nissan).

On the 7th of Nissan, the first day after the mourning period came to an end, Joshua instructed the Jews to stock up on provisions and prepare themselves to cross the Jordan river and begin the conquest of the Promised Land. This was the first time Joshua addressed the nation, and they unconditionally accepted him as their new leader.

The actual crossing occurred on the 10th of Nissan.