

Torah Weekly

ת"בס

March 29- April 4, 2020
4-10 Nissan, 5780

Torah: Tzav: Leviticus 6:1 - 8:36

Haftorah:
Jeremiah 7:21-28; Jeremiah
9:22-23

PARSHAT TZAV

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 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

We offer 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 (available to all prisons).

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INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

The New You Each and every morning, the first order of the day in the Holy Temple was for the kohen (priest) to remove a small portion of the ashes from the altar and place it on the floor just next to the altar. The verse in the Torah portion of Tzav states: The kohen shall don his linen tunic, and he shall don his linen trousers on his flesh. He shall lift out the ashes into which the fire has consumed the burnt offering upon the altar, and put them down next to the altar. (Leviticus 6:3.) The purpose of this ritual was not merely to tidy up the ashes left over from the fire that had burned all night, for if that was the case the commandment would have been to remove more than just a symbolic amount of ash. In fact, after the priest would remove a small portion of the ashes, the other priests would place the remainder of the ashes in a large heap in the center of the altar. (See Mishnah, Tamid 2:2: "They then began to throw the ashes onto the heap. This heap was in the middle of the altar, and sometimes there was as much as 300 kor on it.") What, then, is the significance of lifting and removing the ashes? Why is it so important that it's the first ritual performed in the Temple, the first step in the service of G-d? Ashes are what is left over from the previous day's service. Yesterday, your service may have been perfect. Yesterday, you may have actualized your G-d-given

potential. Yesterday, you may have achieved all that you possibly could have achieved with your opportunities, talents and strengths. That was yesterday. However, if you offer the identical service today, if you do not grow spiritually. If you don't become more loving, more compassionate, more patient, more thoughtful, more committed, then you are stuck in the past. The first step in serving G-d each morning is the realization that the ashes that represent "the old me" must be removed, in order to clear the way for "the new me," for the me that will actualize today's even greater potential. That is why each night the chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad movement, would tell themselves, "Tomorrow will be totally different." They did not say "a bit different," they said "totally different." They did not feel guilty for not realizing that day's potential, because they *did* realize it; rather, they understood that the next day's potential would be so much greater. The portion of Tzav is always read in close proximity to the holiday of Passover. Indeed, the message of the ashes is the reason why remembering the exodus from Egypt is so central to Judaism. In Hebrew, Egypt is Mitzrayim, which means "constraints." You may be a great human being, but if

today you are in the same spiritual space that you were in yesterday, you are in Egypt. The Torah therefore insists that you "remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life." Each morning when you wake up, remember to remove the ashes. Do not limit yourself to the person you were yesterday. Remember the Exodus and break free. *By Rabbi Menachem Feldman 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 reiach 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. As a rabbi, I am often asked to pray for people. This one is in need of a blessing for improved health, the other wants to earn a better living, and so it goes. Of course, there are set times for such prayers in the synagogue

service, and I am happy to oblige. But I also suggest to people that they themselves should be in shul for the prayer too. Furthermore, there is no more sincere prayer than that of the person in need. Surely their sincerity will be unmatched, even by the most pious of rabbis. The story is told of a saintly rabbi of yesteryear who was approached by a woman in need of a blessing for her child. The rabbi demanded a large amount for charity in return for his prayer. The woman was apologetic, and said she didn't have that amount of money. Could the rabbi reduce the price? But he was adamant. After all her haggling got her nowhere, the woman stormed out in a huff. "I don't need you to talk to the Almighty for me," she said angrily. "I'll pray for myself." "Aha," said the rabbi. "That is exactly what I was hoping to hear. Your prayer will, in fact, be better and more effective than anyone else's on your behalf." The saintly man understood that this woman was placing too much credence in him, and forgetting about G-d. There used to be an unhealthy—and, thankfully, now largely discredited—attitude among many that one could hire a rabbi to perform all religious duties on his or her behalf. Let the rabbi keep kosher, and let him observe Shabbat and the festivals. Let him study the Torah, to keep it alive (barely) to pass on to the next generation . . . of rabbis! Meanwhile, I will live the easy life, and pay for the services of a rabbinical professional when I need them. Until then, don't bother me, I'm busy. I once encouraged someone to try putting on tefillin in the mornings. His response: "Rabbi, you do it for me." I asked him if I could also eat for him and sleep for him. Rabbis are not meant to be intermediaries between Jews and G-d. Every Jew has a personal and direct relationship with G-d. There are not 612 commandments for ordinary Jews and 614 for rabbis. We all have the same 613 obligations, no more, no less. Rabbis are only teachers, 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." *By Rabbi Yossi Goldman*

March 30, 2020 --- 5 Nissan, 5780

Spies to Jericho (1273 BCE)

Two days before the conclusion of the thirty-day mourning period following the passing of Moses on Adar 7, 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).

April 1, 2020 --- 7 Nissan, 5780

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)

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.

April 2, 2020 --- 8 Nissan, 5780

Feast Ended in Shushan (366 BCE)

The grand 180-day feast hosted by King Achashverosh came to an end on this day. Achashverosh miscalculated the start date of Jeremiah's prophecy which promised the rebuilding of the Holy Temple after 70 years of Babylonian exile. When, according to his calculations, the seventy years had passed and the Jews were not redeemed, he orchestrated this grand party to celebrate the "demise" of the Chosen Nation. During the course of the party he brazenly displayed many of the vessels looted from the Holy Temple by the Babylonian armies.

April 3, 2020 --- 9 Nissan, 5780

Seven Day Feast Begun (366 BCE)

Following his 180 day feast for all his international subjects, which ended a day earlier, King Achashverosh began a seven-day feast for his subjects living in Shushan, his capital. This feast ended with the death of his queen, Vashti.

April 4, 2020 --- 10 Nissan, 5780

War of Egyptian Firstborn (1313 BCE)

On the Shabbat before the Exodus--Nissan 10th on that year--the first-born of Egypt, who occupied the senior positions in the priesthood and government, fought a bloody battle with Pharaoh's troops, in an effort to secure the release of the Israelites and prevent the Plague of the Firstborn. This "great miracle" is commemorated each year on the Shabbat before Passover, which is therefore called Shabbat HaGadol, "The Great Shabbat." (This is one of the rare instances in which a commemorative date in the Jewish calendar is set by the day of the week rather than the day of the month.)

April 4, 2020 --- 10 Nissan, 5780

Miriam's Passing (1274 BCE)

Miriam, the sister of Moses, passed away at the age of 126 on the 10th of Nissan of the year 2487 from creation (1274 BCE) -- 39 years after the Exodus and exactly one year before the Children of Israel entered the Holy Land. It is in deference to her passing that the "Great Shabbat" is commemorated on the Shabbat before Passover rather than the calendar date of the miracle's occurrence, Nissan 10.

April 4, 2020 --- 10 Nissan, 5780

Israelites Cross Jordan (1273 BCE)

Three days after the two spies dispatched by Joshua scouted the city of Jericho the children of Israel were ready to enter the land promised by G-d to their ancestors as their eternal heritage. As they approached the Jordan with the Holy Ark carried by the Kohanim (priests) in their lead, the river parted for them, as the waters of the Red Sea had split when their fathers and mothers marched out of Egypt 40 years earlier.