

# Torah Weekly

ת"ס

April 3-9, 2022  
2 - 8 Nissan, 5782

Torah Reading:  
Leviticus 14:1 - 15:33  
Haftarah:  
Kings II 7:3-20

PARSHAT METZORA

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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No One Forgotten.

## 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. 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

## But It's True....

There are conceptions of morality expounded in Torah that are all but unknown to other peoples, defects recognized by Torah and deprecated if not totally ignored by others. This week's Torah portion discusses at length the affliction called *tzora'at*, commonly translated as "leprosy." The sages describe this affliction as the punishment for *loshon hara*, an evil tongue.

There are laws of slander and libel in the secular codes. However, so long as one takes care to make only provable statements, no matter how vicious and harmful his words, he is immune to legal punishments. Not even social sanctions are exercised against him. How often people justify malicious gossip that's "just too good to keep" with the acceptable explanation that the slander is true? Disparaging other people, gratuitously discussing their faults simply for the "pleasure" involved — these are forcefully and constantly denounced in the Torah. (Of course all this does not apply in situations like testimony in a court of law.)

The Torah goes still further. Besides forbidding the Jew to speak evil of another, and even to hint at another's shortcomings, it is actually forbidden to listen to evil talk. The passive listener who doesn't utter a word is committing a sin.

Do Jews have to go to others to learn what morality is? Might not more exploration of other practically unknown aspects of Torah ethics and standards of conduct demonstrate the superiority of Torah living to other ways of life?

*By Rabbi Zalman Posner*

*Recite from Haggadah* 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 (see "Today in Jewish History"). 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.

**Sunday, April 3, 2022 --- 2 Nissan, 5782**

**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."

**Monday, April 4, 2022 --- 3 Nissan, 5782**

**Levites Inducted (1312 BCE)**

Following the procedure G-d prescribed (Numbers 8:5-22), Moses inducted the Levites into Tabernacle service. The induction ceremony included sprinkling them with the ashes of the Red Heifer which was prepared the day beforehand.

**Tuesday, April 5, 2022 --- 4 Nissan, 5782**

**Hospital Convoy Ambushed (1948)**

On the morning of the 4th of Nissan, a civilian convoy of doctors and nurses traveling to the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus was attacked by Arab forces. Of the ten vehicles in the caravan, five escaped. The other five vehicles, however, which included two buses and an ambulance, were riddled with machine gun fire and later set ablaze. Altogether 77 Jewish civilians were massacred on that day.

Shortly afterwards, the hospital was closed down and moved to the western part of Jerusalem.

The Mt. Scopus hospital only reopened after the eastern part of Jerusalem was liberated by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. Primarily staffed by Israeli doctors, it is the largest and best equipped hospital in the eastern section of Jerusalem.

**Wednesday, April 6, 2022 --- 5 Nissan, 5782**

**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).

**Passing of R. Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apta (1825)**

R. Avraham Yehoshua Heshel was one of the leading Rebbes of his day, serving as rabbi and spiritual leader first in Apta (presently called Opatow), then in Iasi, and finally in Mezhibuzh. He was known for his great love of his fellow Jews, and is commonly known as "the Ohev Yisroel [lover of Jews] of Apta."

**Shabbat, April 9, 2022 --- 8 Nissan, 5782**

**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.)

**Feast Ended in Shushan (366 BCE)**

The grand 180-day feast hosted by King Achashverosh came to an end on this day.

Achasverosh 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.

**Martyrs of York (1190)**

The Jewish community of York, England, consisting of 150 souls, was massacred by a bloodthirsty mob. Among the martyrs was the Talmudic scholar R. Yom Tov of Joigny.