

Torah Weekly

March 26-April 1, 2023
4-10 Nissan, 5783

Torah Reading:
Leviticus 6:1 - 8:36

Haftarah:
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 Matzah 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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ALEPH 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."

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.

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

The New You

Some people are bulldozers. They move mountains, conquer countries, achieve the seemingly impossible. But then when there are no more mountains to climb, they falter. Routines, maintenance and sustainability are not their strong points. They respond to excitement and challenge, not to the uneventful, monotonous daily grind.

The title word of this week's Parshah, Tzav, means "Command." It introduces G-d's call to Moses to instruct the Kohanim (priests) about the laws of the burnt offerings in the Sanctuary. Rashi points out that the word Tzav, "Command" - rather than the more familiar and softer "Speak" or "Tell" - is generally reserved for instructions which require a sense of zealotry. These are things which need to be performed "immediately as well as for posterity."

Would G-d have doubted the commitment of Aaron and his sons? Was there concern that they would do anything

other than what they were instructed regarding the sacred services? After all, they were the most saintly and dedicated of men. Was there really anything to worry about? Why employ a word implying such urgency?

Says [Rashi](#): it's not only the need for immediacy but also the insistence that the services carry on throughout the generations in the very same way. It is one thing to be committed and excited now when the mitzvah is still fresh and new, but what will happen in future? Will that same commitment still be there down the line, or will the enthusiasm have waned?

In the sporting arena there are athletes, and even teams, who make wonderful starts but then fade before the finish. Others go great guns throughout a contest, but then "choke" at the very end. One cannot achieve greatness by erratic bursts of energy. Concentration and consistency are needed to carry us through until the final moment of the match.

So too in life. People in Hollywood find it pretty easy to get married to one another. But how many stay married? And it is no different in Judaism. Lots of Jews are excellent at Yom Kippur. But what happens all year round? Many have moments of inspiration, but it is allowed to become a passing phase.

A fellow came to Shul to recite kaddish in memory of a parent, but sadly the congregation were struggling to make a minyan (quorum of ten for prayer). He vented his anger at not being able to recite the prayer. One of the men present was less than sympathetic. "And where were you yesterday when someone else needed to say [kaddish](#) and there wasn't a [minyan](#)?" he retorted. Many people make the effort to attend services on the anniversary of a parent's passing, but stay away on "regular" days.

King David in Psalm 24 asks, "Who may ascend the mountain of G-d, and who may stand in His holy place?" It is one thing to climb the mountain but quite another to be able to stay on the summit. There are outstanding trailblazers who struggle with the everyday maintenance of the very programs they themselves initiated. In an ideal world pioneers would do the initiating and ordinary folk would carry on the routine. But it doesn't always work that way. We cannot necessarily afford the luxury of focusing only on the parts of life we enjoy and are stimulated by. More often than not life is a grind. Moments of excitement and discovery are rare. Charting new courses are not everyday experiences. And our creations need long term, consistent maintenance, otherwise they collapse.

The command to the [Kohanim](#) echoes down the ages to each of us. If it is important, do it now. And if it is sacred, carry on doing it forever.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Monday, March 27, 2023 --- 5 Nissan, 5783

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."

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 --- 7 Nissan, 5783

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](#).

Passing of Dr. Moshe Wallach (1957)

In 1890, Dr. Moshe Wallach emigrated from his native Germany to the [Land of Israel](#). Ten years later, he founded the Shaarei Zedek Hospital, one of [Jerusalem's](#) most prominent hospitals. Dr. Wallach was a strictly observant Jew, and the hospital protocol follows [Shabbat](#) and [kashrut](#) observance, and provides religious services for both weekdays and holidays.

In 1929, during a journey by boat from Alexandria to Trieste, Dr. Wallach cured [Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn](#) when he fell ill with a kidney ailment.

Thursday, March 30, 2023 --- 8 Nissan, 5783

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.

Friday, March 31, 2023 --- 9 Nissan, 5783

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.

Passing of R. Aryeh Levin, the "Tzaddik of Jerusalem" (1969)

R. Aryeh Levin, known as the "tzaddik [saint] of [Jerusalem](#)," was legendary for his selfless dedication in assisting his fellow Jews, whether the sick, the poor, or those suffering under the British regime during the Mandate of Palestine (1920-1948).

Shabbat, April 1, 2023 --- 10 Nissan, 5783

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.)

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.

Israelites Cross Jordan (1273 BCE)

Three days after the two spies dispatched by Joshua scouted the city of Jericho (see entry for "[Nissan 7](#)" above), 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. (Joshua 4)