

Parshas Metzorahi in a Nutshell

(Leviticus 9:1–11:47)

Last week's Parshah described the signs of the metzora (commonly mistranslated as "leper")—a person afflicted by a spiritual malady which places him or her in a state of ritual impurity. This week's Torah reading begins by detailing how the recovered metzora is purified by the kohen (priest) with a special procedure involving two birds, spring water in an earthen vessel, a piece of cedar wood, a scarlet thread and a bundle of hyssop.

A home can also be afflicted with tzaraat by the appearance of dark red or green patches on its walls. In a process lasting as long as nineteen days, a kohen determines if the house can be purified, or whether it must be demolished.

Ritual impurity is also engendered through a seminal or other discharge in a man, and menstruation or other discharge of blood in a woman, necessitating purification through immersion in a mikvah. ❖

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Maimonides writes, tzaaras is "is not a natural occurrence; it is a sign and a wonder prevalent among the Jewish people to warn them against lashon hora, 'undesirable speech.'" For speech is a uniquely human potential, reflecting our innermost tendencies. Therefore, if it is misused, it has severe consequences..

-- The Rebbe

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Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Apr 8 / Nissan 9

Candle Lighting.....7:11 pm

Mincha7:15 pm

Shabbos Day – Apr 9 / Nissan 8

Shacharis.....9:30 am*

Torah Reading10:40 am

Kiddush12:15 pm

Mincha7:15 pm

Rabbi's Drasha.....7:35 pm

Shabbos Ends8:12 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:40 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri)6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday)9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin

This week's Bulletin

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Tzara'as

This week's Torah reading begins with the description of the purification process for a person who became impure because of tzaraas, a skin condition resembling leprosy. Only it is not leprosy. Indeed, it is an ailment that has no biological cause whatsoever, but instead comes about because of a person's conduct. Because he spread lashon hara, malicious gossip about another person, his own body is affected and his skin begins to decay.

How can he correct himself? After the kohen (priest) determines him to be impure, he is told to go outside the city limits and live alone, distant from others. As our Sages explain: "Since he created separation among others, he is forced to live alone." As he lives his solitary existence, he hopefully learns the severity of his transgression and in this way, expiates his sin. ❖

Thank You to:

**The Baal Korei, and
The Security Volunteers**

Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, Apr 9, 2022

Eastern Daylight Savings Time

Earliest Tallis 5:29 AM

Latest Morning Shema..... 9:40 AM

Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:32 PM

Plag Hamincha..... 6:12 PM

Earliest Evening Shema.... 7:59 PM

Chassidic Masters

Purification of the Metzora – A Lesson in Repentance

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

The Torah portion Metzora begins by stating: “This shall be the law of the metzora : he shall be brought to the kohen, the priest.” The verse then goes on to say, “The kohen shall go out of the camp” and inspect the metzora.

Since the metzora could not possibly come to the kohen , (for until he was declared free of tzora’as he was prohibited from entering the Jewish encampment), what are we to make of the verse “he shall be brought to the kohen ”?

Additionally, why does the Torah use the expression “he shall be brought to the kohen ,” rather than “he shall come to the kohen ”? The former phrase seems to imply that the metzora a) is brought forcibly, or b) that his appearance before the kohen is inevitable.

The leprous-like affliction of tzora’as was a punishment for speaking Lashon Hora, slanderous and evil gossip. As part of the punishment, the metzora was to “sit alone; outside the camp.”

The Gemara explains that since the metzora’s gossip caused a separation between one person and another, he is punished by being separated from others.

In a more spiritual sense, to cause separation and strife is to oppose holiness, one characteristic of which is unity. This was why the metzora was banished from even the lowest of Jewish encampments, for his actions were thoroughly unholy.

However, even a person who committed such a dastardly act will eventually atone, for “G-d devises means so that even he who is banished shall not be outcast forever.”

The opening verse of our Torah portion thus assures us that even an individual afflicted with tzora’as will eventually “be brought to the kohen ” — he will repent and return to holiness.

And this is so even if the person has absolutely no desire to repent, for G-d desires his repentance. Therefore, willingly or unwillingly, he will surely “be brought to the kohen.”

G-d, however, doesn’t want anyone’s repentance to be forced upon him from Above; every sinner should desire to repent. This is why, after the verse says “he shall be brought to the kohen ,” it goes on to add that “the kohen shall go out of the camp”:

The first step in achieving repentance for one who has no desire to repent comes about because of a desire from Above. As such, it does not permeate the sinner.

The verse indicates this first step by saying: “he shall be brought to the kohen ,” meaning that the person is transported from his own status and is forcibly brought to a situation that he would not have chosen on his own — repentance is foisted upon him from Above.

Thereafter comes the second stage, wherein “the kohen shall go out of the camp.” This means to say that the urge to repentance must be framed in the mindset in which the metzora finds himself, so that repentance is done willingly.

Moreover, when the purification of the metzora, i.e., the act of repentance, comes about in the same place in which the metzora finds himself — outside the pale of holiness — then the sinner’s very iniquities are transformed into merits.

This causes a person to rise to such an exalted level that he can attain a degree of holiness which is impossible for those righteous individuals who have never been banished “outside the camp.” ❖

... the Torah ordained that when a person had a tzaraas blemish, he would have to appear before a kohen (priest) to have the blemish inspected and ultimately be declared pure. The kohanim were characterized by a desire for unity and love for their fellow Jew. For that reason, they were chosen to bless the people.

When a person with a tzaraas blemish came to a kohen, a two-tiered process took place. On one level, the kohen was watching the internal process of purification. On a deeper level, he was causing it. Every time he looked at the blemish, he imparted spiritual energy — love and care — to the blemished person, energy that enabled him to heal his character flaws and ultimately be purified from his affliction. ❖

"Shabbos Hagadol"

What is Shabbat Hagadol?

The Shabbat which precedes Passover is called Shabbat haGadol, the Great Sabbath, for many and varied reasons, as we shall explain below.

There are also many special customs associated with this Shabbat. It was in Egypt that Israel celebrated the very first Shabbat Ha-Gadol on the tenth of Nissan, five days before their redemption. On that day, the Children of Israel were given their first commandment which applied only to that Shabbat, but not to future generations: On the tenth day of this month [Nissan]... each man should take a lamb for the household, a lamb for each home (Exodus 12:3).

This mitzvah of preparing a lamb for the Passover offering four days before it was to be brought, applied only to that first Passover in Egypt, and the Torah does not tell us that we must continue to do so before every future Passover. Nevertheless, the people continued to do this to make sure that their lambs had no blemishes which would preclude their being sacrificed.

Many miracles were performed for the Children of Israel on this first Shabbat haGadol. The Torah commanded them to take their lambs and tie them to the bedpost. When they did so, their Egyptian neighbors saw this and asked:

"What is the lamb for?"

The Children of Israel answered: "It is to be slaughtered as a Passover sacrifice as G-d has commanded us."

The Egyptians, for whom the lamb was a deity, gnashed their teeth in anger but could not utter a sound in protest.

Many other miracles as well were performed in connection with the Passover offering, we therefore refer to this day as Shabbat haGadol.

Why Do We Celebrate on Shabbat Hagadol instead of the 10th of Nissan?

Why do we commemorate the miracle on the Shabbat before Passover rather than on the tenth of Nissan, the date on which it actually took place? We see that the Torah itself mentions only the date rather than the day of the week.

It is because the miracle is closely connected to Shabbat. The Egyptians were aware that the Children of Israel observed Shabbat and did not busy themselves tending animals on that day, so when the Egyptians saw them taking lambs and binding them to their bedposts on Shabbat, they were surprised and decided to investigate what was happening.

The Children of Israel were in great danger when they were confronted and were saved only by virtue of a miracle. We therefore commemorate this miracle on Shabbat rather than on the tenth of the month of Nissan.

Moreover, had it not been Shabbat, the Children of Israel would not have needed a miracle to save them. They would have been able to deceive the Egyptians by diverting their attention or making up some kind of explanation. On Shabbat, however, they would not do so, for, as our Sages said, "Even an ignorant man will not tell lies on Shabbat." Thus, we see that they were endangered because of their observance of Shabbat, and they needed a miracle to save them.

A further reason why we recall the miracle on Shabbat rather than on the tenth of the month is that, forty years later, Miriam died on that day and the well which accompanied the Children of Israel and provided them with water in the wilderness, disappeared. When the anniversary of Miriam's death falls on a weekday, some observe it as a fast for the righteous.

(Continued next page)

"Shabbos Hagadol" (continued)

What are Some of the Customs of Shabbat Hagadol?

Many communities recite special hymns during the morning services on Shabbat haGadol. The main theme of these hymns is the laws of Passover, which are presented in verse form in order to make it easy for people to become acquainted with the laws of the Festival.

On the Shabbat preceding Shabbat haGadol, Psalm 104 and Psalms 120-134 [the fifteen psalms that begin with Shir haMa'alot, which are recited every Shabbat throughout the winter] are said for the last time of the year.

We read part of the Passover Haggadah on Shabbat haGadol, beginning from the paragraph that begins with the words "Avadim hayinu" ("We were slaves") until the words, "lechaper al kol avonotaynu" ("to atone for all of our sins"). One reason for this is that the redemption began on Shabbat haGadol. Another reason is to familiarize the children with the contents of the Haggadah, in fulfillment of the mitzvah of You shall tell your children on that day. Yet another reason is that the reading from the Haggadah on Shabbat haGadol is like a rehearsal for the Seder night, and helps us to become more familiar with the text.

In some Sephardic communities, it is customary, when greeting one another on this Shabbat, to add the title of the day: Shabbat haGadol mevorach, a blessed Shabbat haGadol.

From as long ago as the days of the Tanna'im and Amora'im, it has been customary in Jewish communities throughout the world for the outstanding Torah scholar of the congregation to address all the people on this Shabbat. The purpose of this address is to teach the people the ways of G-d and instruct them in the laws of Passover. The rabbi explains how utensils must be prepared for use on Passover, how to remove the chametz, and the laws concerning the baking of matzot. His purpose is to ensure that the people not err in the slightest degree in their observance of the Festival. It is also customary for the rabbi to add other material that speaks to the heart, as well as subjects of topical interest.

When Shabbat haGadol falls on the day before Passover [and all of the preparations have already been made], it is customary to move this special sermon to the previous Shabbat, so that the congregation can learn all of the applicable laws in time to prepare for the Festival

It is an ancient custom in some communities, on the day before Shabbat haGadol, to bake a small quantity of bread from the flour which has been reserved for making the matzot. This bread is referred to as the "challah of the poor" or the "synagogue challah," and is distributed to the poor in the community. Each person would fulfill this custom in accordance with his means. The wealthy would prepare a large quantity of this special challah, and those less well off would prepare a smaller quantity.



PATERSON SHUL -- PASSOVER SCHEDULE

The Paterson Shul @ "Seniors Tower of Paterson" located at 510 E. 27th Street/Paterson will have a Minyan on Shabbat April 16 (first Day Pesach) at 9:30a.m.

We will also have a Minyan on Saturday, April 23 at 9:00a.m. with Yizkor approximately 10:30a.m.

This is a very important time to help make the Minyan. Please email the Gabbai/Volunteer: JerrySchrantz@gmail.com for additional info.

P.S. With COVID restrictions lifted for masks, they are only required when entering/exiting the apartment complex. For more info visit: www.PatersonShul.org

From Our Sages – Metzora

This shall be the law of the metzora . . . he shall be brought to the kohen (Leviticus 14:2)

Both the onset and the termination of the state of tzaraat are effected only by the proclamation of a kohen. If suspect markings appear on a person, they are examined by an expert on the complex laws of tzaraat—usually, but not necessarily, a kohen; but even after a diagnosis of tzaraat had been made, the state of ritual impurity does not take effect, and the metzora’s banishment is not carried out, until a kohen pronounces him “impure.” This is why even after all physical signs of tzaraat have departed, the removal of the state of impurity and the metzora’s readmission into the community is achieved only by the kohen’s declaration.

The kohen’s function as a condemner and ostracizer runs contrary to his most basic nature and role. The kohen is commanded by G-d to “bless His people Israel with love”; our sages describe a “disciple of Aaron” as one who “loves peace, pursues peace, loves G-d’s creatures and brings them close to Torah.” But this is precisely the reason that the Torah entrusts to the kohen the task of condemning the metzora.

There is nothing more hateful to G-d than division between His children. The metzora must be ostracized because, through his slander and talebearing, he is himself a source of divisiveness; nevertheless, the Torah is loath to separate him from the community. So it is not enough that the technical experts say that he marked by tzaraat. It is only when the kohen—whose very being shudders at the thought of banishing a member of the community—is convinced that there is no escaping a verdict of tzaraat that the metzora is separated from his people. And it is only when the one doing the banishing is suffused with loving concern for the banished person that the penalty will yield a positive result—the repentance and rehabilitation of the metzora.

There is another lesson here as well: it is not the fact of the tzaraat that renders the metzora impure, but the kohen’s declaration of his impurity. In other words, no matter how terrible a person’s state may be, to speak ill of him is more terrible still. The kohen’s saying that he is impure affects his spiritual state far more profoundly than the actual fact of his tzaraat!

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Two birds (Leviticus 14:4)

Because the plague of tzaraat comes in punishment for evil talk, which is an act of chattering, therefore birds are needed for his purification, because these chatter continuously with a twittering sound.

-- (Rashi; Talmud)

Cedar wood . . . and hyssop (Leviticus 14:4)

Because he has exalted himself like a cedar . . . he should humble himself like a grass.

-- (Midrash Tanchuma)

I will put the plague of tzaraat in a house (Leviticus 14:34)

So is it when leprous plagues come upon man: First they come upon his house. If he repents, it requires only the removal [of the affected stones]; if not, it requires tearing down the entire house. Then the plagues come upon one’s clothes. If he repents, they require washing; if not, they require burning. Then the plagues come upon his body. If he repents, he undergoes purification; if not, “he shall dwell alone.”

-- (Midrash Rabbah) ❖

Haftorah for Parshas Metzorah in a nutshell

II Kings 7:3-20

This week's haftorah discusses the story of four men stricken by tzara'at, a skin ailment caused by sins — one of the main topics of this week's Torah reading.

Haftorah's backdrop: King Ben-Hadad of Aram besieged Samaria (the Northern Kingdom of Israel). The resulting famine was catastrophic, reducing many to cannibalism. King Jehoram of Israel wanted to execute the prophet Elisha, considering that his prayers could have prevented the entire tragedy. Elisha reassured the king: "So has G-d said, 'At this time tomorrow, a seah of fine flour will sell for [merely] a shekel, and two seahs of barley will sell for a shekel in the gate of Samaria.'" One of the king's officers present scoffed at the prophecy: "Behold, if G-d makes windows in the sky, will this thing come about?" Elisha responded, "Behold, you will see with your own eyes, but you shall not eat there from."

Now, four men suffering from tzara'at dwelled in quarantine outside the city. They too were hungry, victims of the famine. They decided to approach the enemy camp to beg for food. They arrived only to find a deserted camp. For "G-d had caused the Aramean camp to hear the sound of chariots and the sound of horses, the sound of a great army. And they said to one another, 'Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us.'" The entire enemy army fled, leaving behind their tents, horses, donkeys and provisions.

The four men went to the city and reported their findings to the gatekeepers who, in turn, informed King Jehoram. Though originally thinking that this was an ambush planned by the enemy, the king sent messengers who confirmed the miracle. The people swarmed out of the city and looted the enemy camp, thus breaking the famine and fulfilling Elisha's prophecy.

And the officer? The king placed him in charge of the city gates. He was trampled to death by the rampaging crowds — after seeing the fulfillment of the prophet's words... ❖

PASSOVER IS COMING SOON.

DON'T FORGET TO SELL YOUR CHOMETZ.

Have you signed up for the communal seder?

(Ask the Rabbis).

שבת שלום גוט שבת!



Gutt Shabbos to all!