

LampLighter

30 Nissan
Tazriah-Metzorah

875

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

One of the laws pertaining to the Biblical disease of Tzora'as [a form of skin affliction] discussed in this week's Torah portion, Metzora, seems somewhat surprising.

If a person discovered an eruption, a bright spot, or a white hair indicative of the disease on part of his body, he was pronounced "impure" by the priest. If, however, the leprosy covered his entire body, he was pronounced pure as it says in the Torah. "[If] it is all turned white, he is pure."

How can it be that when the tzora'as is confined to one area, the person is impure, yet once it has spread all over his body, he is pure? There are two possible explanations:

- The sole reason he is considered pure is because it is G-d's will. According to logic, the person whose tzora'as covers all of his flesh should be impure; G-d, however, has decreed that he is pure.
- The law itself is logical. When the tzora'as appears on only a part of a person's skin, it is obvious that he is suffering from some sort of malady. If it covers all of his skin, it is indicative of the individual's constitution and nature, not symptomatic of a disease.

The Talmud cites this law in connection to the concept of redemption, using the affliction of tzora'as as a metaphor for sin. "The son of David [Moshiach] will not come until all authority has become heretical", i.e., when G-dlessness is officially sanctioned and widespread throughout the world.

Here we may ask the same question raised regarding leprosy. If the world will be entirely dark, how will it be possible for the light of Redemption to shine through? Why will the Redemption occur precisely when evil is so powerful that it has overcome the entire world?

Again, the above two explanations may be applied to solve our dilemma:

- There is no logic involved. Moshiach will come when he does only because G-d will have decreed it; thus the Redemption will occur independent of the world's condition. An all-powerful and eternal G-d can certainly bring Moshiach no matter how degraded and evil the world becomes.
- The fact that evil is ascendant throughout the entire world is proof that something unusual is taking place; were this not so, some pockets of good would certainly have remained. Rather, the absolute supremacy of evil indicates that all the negative forces have become externalized, as they have already been fully vanquished from within.

Thus, the phenomenon of "all authority has become heretical" is actually part of the world's purification, a process of separating good from evil that will ultimately culminate with Moshiach's revelation. At that time the world will be sufficiently prepared for the light of Redemption.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall!

By Mordechai Wollenberg

This week's Torah portion speaks about various physical blemishes and conditions which can afflict a person.

The Talmud, in the tractate *Negaim* which deals with these types of blemishes and conditions, notes that "a person sees all kinds of blemishes except for their own".

The story is told of a prominent doctor who was known for his generosity but was also prone to 'blowing his own trumpet'.

One day he was travelling when he saw the local rabbi walking. He stopped to offer the rabbi a ride. As they travelled together, the doctor, as was his wont, began to speak about his achievements. "You know Rabbi, I get a lot of patients who can't afford to pay but I never turn them away. I treat them exactly the same as my wealthier patients."

"I also do that," replied the rabbi.

The doctor figured that perhaps the rabbi was referring to the spiritual counsel he gave his spiritual "patients". "Also," he continued, "often patients need expensive drugs. If they can't afford it, I provide them for free."

"I also do that," rejoined the rabbi.

Maybe he means that sometimes he also gives people material help, the doctor thought. "Sometimes people need days of post-operative care. I voluntarily give it to them, even though I have little spare time."

"I also do that."

So it went on, the doctor continuing to lavish praise on himself, and the rabbi answering each time, "I also do that".

Eventually the doctor couldn't take it anymore and he asked the rabbi, "Rabbi, I don't understand. You're not a doctor, how can you do all these things?"

"Oh, I don't do all those things; I only meant that I also only talk about my own good qualities!"

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic movement, taught us that another person is like a mirror-if we find ourselves noticing faults in others, it is because they exist within ourselves. This is not such a foreign concept-it is common in psychological terms to speak of one person "projecting" their own faults onto another. It is incumbent upon us to realize that when we see a fault in somebody else, it is only because we need to work on that very fault within ourselves. As the Talmud and the above story illustrate, we tend not to notice our own faults except in others!

The whole world is a mirror designed to show us how we can work on ourselves and our own deficiencies. Once we realize this then we can understand that the fault we see in another person is the way in which Divine Providence is showing us our own shortcomings. Then it becomes a lot easier to be tolerant and understanding of others.



Diamonds in the Sand

by Tzvi Jacobs

In 1935, in the midst of the Depression, the Southern Baptist minister knocked on the door of Nathan Bass.

"Mr. Bass, you have seven children, and there is no Sunday school for Hebrew people in our little town."

"That's true, Reverend," Mr. Bass said. "The closest Jewish community is in Columbia (South Carolina)."

"Columbia! Why I reckon that's a long 30-mile drive. Why don't you bring your children to us? We're 3 blocks away."

On the following Sunday morning, Nathan Bass started up his car while his wife Esther helped the children get ready for their first day in Sunday school. All but one-year-old Jack piled into the car and Nathan pressed the pedal to the floor for the next 30 miles. It took a full hour to reach the doors of Columbia's Jewish synagogue.

Nathan and Esther Bass owned and ran Bass Mercantile Company, a general merchandise store in North, South Carolina. From that day forth, Nathan spent the better part of every Sunday - the only day his store was closed - driving his children to Columbia.

The sight of the automobile chugging out of North with five children hugging the windows moved across the spectacles of many local folks. "If Mr. Bass can drive his children for a full hour to the Hebrew Sunday school," the local ministers would preach, "Heaven knows, y'all can roll your children out of bed and send 'em down the street to our fine Sunday school right here in North."

This lesson was also not lost on Ruth, the eldest of four girls. Since their parents forbade them to date non-Jewish boys, the Bass girls were always seen together.

In a different city in South Carolina, lived Isaac Jacobs. Although Isaac's

parents were born in South Carolina, they were orthodox Jews and kept their business closed on Shabbat. Isaac served in the South Pacific in World War II. Isaac would spend his spare time writing letters home or arranging for Hebrew High Holiday prayer books to arrive in time for the Rosh Hashana services, which he led on Christmas Isle in the South Pacific.

In 1946, Isaac returned to the Carolina shore. He had saved almost every penny the Army had given him and some of his buddies proposed a business deal.

"We're buying land along the Carolina coast. With your \$2,000 Isaac, you could buy 200 acres."

"Why should I throw my money away on a bunch of sand!" the practical Isaac questioned.

Instead, Isaac bought a station wagon and returned to his pre-war job as a travelling salesman in the family wholesale clothing business, Jacobs Hosiery Company. From Monday morning to Friday afternoon, Isaac drove around the small towns of South Carolina calling on the clothing stores and drug stores and any establishment that sold "dry goods." On Saturdays, Jacobs Hosiery Company was closed in honour of the Jewish Sabbath. On Sundays, Isaac drove to the Jacobs Hosiery showroom near downtown Charleston and served walk-in customers.

After the war years, businesses prospered. The next step was marriage. Through his six sisters, the "Jacobs sisters," Isaac met all of the eligible Jewish girls in Charleston, but never found the right one.

The hair above Isaac's forehead receded with each passing year, and the selection of young Jewish women was also thinning. By the time he had reached age 33, Isaac's sisters and brother were all married and raising families. Isaac was given the name of a sweet Jewish girl who had also been looking, reportedly for a Jewish man of impeccable character. They met a couple of times in Columbia. He kept in touch with Ruth, mainly through letters written at the end of long days calling on businesses.

By 1950, a number of exclusive hotels and other businesses had popped up on the sands of Myrtle Beach, on some of the acres that Isaac had a chance to buy. Isaac always regretted the decision not to buy that "sand." If he had bought that land and held it, he would never have had to sit behind the wheel of a station wagon, schlepping samples of underwear from store to store.

In 1951, Ruth and Isaac Jacobs were married. A year later, in Charleston, South Carolina, Isaac and Ruth were blessed with a daughter. In 1954, I was born, and then in 1956, another son. My older sister was enrolled in the local public school. (My parents later regretted that they never transferred my sister to the Jewish day school.) A short time later, the 200-plus year old Jewish community in Charleston opened a Jewish day school and my parents enrolled me in the nursery. A year later, my younger brother entered nursery. Eventually there were five of us in the Charleston Hebrew Institute.

Though the tuition weighed too heavy on my father's modest income, there was never talk of sending us to the public elementary school. Instead, my mother took a job as a part-time school secretary, sitting in a desk in the hallway below the clock that rang loudly in her ears every hour. Perhaps in that merit, when my father turned 53 years, my mother gave him some news that shocked him. Some months later, they were blessed with a seventh child.

For the next 30 years, my father struggled to feed, clothe, shelter, educate, and marry off his children. Dad always regretted that he didn't buy that sand, and I understand. But perhaps if he had an office in one of those fancy beach front hotels, Dad would have given up the travelling salesman job and would not have met the humble girl from a small town. After all, after 82 years of struggling in this world, what good is a bunch of sand when you can have the diamond-like mitzvot (commandments) that will last for eternity. In the end, we only take with us the mitzvot we have done. But the diamonds that sparkle with the wisdom and light of Torah are ours forever.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Bar Mitzvah

10 Kislev, 5740-1980

Concerning the notification that you will soon be entering the age of mitzvot, it should be G-d's will that from 13 years of age you will grow to 15, etc. as it says in the Mishna (Avot Chapter 5). You will surely also increase in studiousness and diligence in the study of Torah, the revealed Torah and Chasidut, and you will be careful in the performance of mitzvot, and G-d will bring you success in being a Chasid, a fearer of Heaven, and a scholar.

P.S. The following is written in the "language of the land" so that you will be able, if you want, to show it to your friends. This is in the spirit of the commandment of "And you shall love your neighbour as yourself". That means that in all matters one must look for the good of others, how much more so in matters of Judaism, Torah and its mitzvot.

It seems strange that on the day of the Bar Mitzva, which the Zohar declares is almost like the day when the Jews received the Torah, yet Tachnun [a penitential prayer], which is not said on Shabbat Yom Tov or even "Minor Holidays", is said by the Bar Mitzva boy, as if it were any ordinary weekday.

Human capacities are limited in general, especially the capacities of a boy at the start of his fourteenth year, yet he must take on all the duties and responsibilities of a full-fledged Jew. More than that, he needs to observe them with joy, as it says, "Serve G-d with joy". So, the question is how is he going to carry out all that is expected of him, especially as a member of a people who are a minority among the nations of the world? Even in this country, where there is every opportunity to carry out all religious duties, still most people are more interested and engaged in the material aspects of life.

The answer is that Torah and mitzvot have been given by G-d, the Creator of the world, and of man, and He knows all the difficulties that a Jew may encounter. G-d has provided every Jew with the necessary strength to overcome any and all difficulties to live up to G-d's Will, for G-d would not expect someone to do something which is beyond his capacity.

If, however, there should be a moment of weakness, when carrying out G-d's Will is not in the fullest measure of perfection, G-d in His infinite goodness makes it possible to "say Tachnun" and do teshuva [which is about repenting that moment of weakness].

Therefore, on the first day of becoming a full-fledged Jew, after fulfilling the very first mitzva, saying the Shema, by which a Jew declares his total commitment to G-d and obedience to all His commandments, the Bar Mitzva boy does say Tachnun the following morning and afternoon. We are assured by our sages that "Nothing stands in the way of teshuva".

This knowledge will, also assist you when you do the great mitzva of v'ahavta Ire'acho kamocho [loving one's fellow Jew as oneself], bringing the alienated closer to Judaism. When you remember that "Nothing stands in the way of teshuva," you will eagerly and compassionately apply it to them also, especially when in most cases, the failure to observe fully the Torah and mitzvot is due to extenuating circumstances.

With all the above in mind, and as you are being fortunate in growing up in a family where Yiddishkeit is a living experience in your everyday life, you will start out on your way of life as a full-fledged Jew with confidence, and will proceed from strength to strength, and be a source of true pride and joy to your dear parents, family, and to all our Jewish people.

A MITZVA A DAY

Positive Commandment 177: Judging Honestly

A Jew who is ordered to be brought before a Beit-Din (a Jewish court) is assured of fair judgment. It is not dependent on the nature of the judge, nor his mood! The Torah commanded us to judge in a fair manner. This is not merely a helpful suggestion or gentle prodding - it is a commandment! The judge knows he is guided by a higher authority than his own. This is learned out from words (in the Torah), "With righteousness, judge your neighbour" (Leviticus 19:15).

A WORD from the Director

In this week's Parsha we learn of a leprosy-like disease. This disease afflicted a person, his home or other possessions, when he indulged in slander.

When a person discovered that he suffered from this malady, he became aware, without a shadow of a doubt, that there was an omniscient G-d who had witnessed his sin. The person was then required to seclude himself from the rest of society for seven days. These seven days were spent in introspection and consultation with the priest on how to atone for his transgression.

Speaking unfavourably about another shows a lack of "ahavat Yisrael"-love of one's fellow as oneself. Just as we don't want others to notice or talk about our own failings, so also we shouldn't talk about other people's faults.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that when you see a fault in another person, that same fault most definitely exists-even if only in a minute amount-in you. For, just as you cannot recognize a person who you have never met, so too you cannot "recognize" a fault in another which you do not have yourself.

Another teaching attributed to the Baal Shem Tov deals with the reaction a person needs to have on hearing slander or gossip. When you hear an uncomplimentary report about another person, even if you don't know that other person, you should be very deeply pained. This is because there are only two possibilities. Either what is being said about the individual is true, in which case he is flawed and in need of improvement; or it is not true at all, in which case slander is being spoken and the talebearer is being harmful not only to the other person but to himself as well.

Let us all strive therefore to be able to deal with our own faults and 'turn a blind eye' to those of others.

J.I. Gutnick

MOSHIACH MATTERS

An apostate said to Geviha ben Pesisa, "Woe to you, you wicked ones, who maintain that the dead will revive! The living indeed die, but shall the dead live?!" He replied, "Woe to you, you wicked ones, who maintain the dead will not revive. If those who never lived now live, surely those who have lived will live again!"

(Talmud Sanhedrin 91a)

It Happened Once...



"Where will we be staying?" Reb Yeshaya Berlin asked Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch (known as the Rebbe Maharash, fourth leader of Chabad, whose birthday is this Sunday, 2 Iyar) upon their arrival in Paris.

"At the Alexander Hotel," the Rebbe replied. The Chasidim accompanying the Rebbe on this special trip were surprised. The Alexander Hotel was famous as one of the most luxurious establishments in the city. Members of royalty and other high-ranking dignitaries were its usual guests. "Common" people, no matter how wealthy, never dreamt of crossing its threshold, yet this was where the Rebbe wished to stay.

The Rebbe then told the Chasidim that he would do the talking, as none of the other members of his entourage spoke French. In fact, the Rebbe Maharash was fluent in many foreign languages, among them Russian, French and Latin. He was also extremely well read in a wide range of subjects and disciplines, in addition to his outstanding scholarship in both the revealed and esoteric aspects of Torah.

At the front desk of the hotel the Rebbe announced that he was interested in reserving a suite of rooms. "There are several suites available at present," the clerk replied, "at a cost of 200 francs per night." It was an almost unimaginable sum of money in those days.

But the Rebbe wasn't satisfied. "Perhaps you have something better?" he inquired. "I wish to stay on the same floor as the game room," the Rebbe insisted. The clerk consulted the register for a moment. "You're in luck," he told the Rebbe. "There's an empty suite next door to the casino." He then quoted a price far higher than 200 francs. The Rebbe asked to reserve three rooms - one for himself, two for the rest of his entourage - but the Chasidim were in no financial position to stay at the Alexander, and found lodging elsewhere.

The Rebbe went up to his quarters and remained there for several hours. In the meantime, the Chasidim came back from their hotel and waited outside the Rebbe's room.

The Rebbe's face was very serious when he eventually opened the door. Much to everyone's astonishment, he then strode purposefully over to the hotel's gambling casino and went inside.

Needless to say, the players at the gaming tables were unaccustomed to guests of the Rebbe's stature joining them in their pursuits. Eyebrows were raised throughout the hall. Trailing after him, the Chasidim were just as baffled as the gamblers. But from long experience they knew that Rabbi Shmuel certainly had his reasons.

At one of the tables sat a young Jewish man, engrossed in a game of cards. In front of him was a goblet of wine, from which he sipped every now and then. The Rebbe walked over and sat down next to him.

For the first few minutes the Rebbe said nothing and the man continued playing. Then the Rebbe suddenly stretched out his arm and placed a hand on the young man's shoulder. "Young man," the Rebbe said, "it is forbidden to drink the wine of gentiles."

The Rebbe paused a moment to let his words sink in. "Non-kosher wine dulls the mind and the heart," he continued, adding the admonition, "Be a Jew." Without further ado the Rebbe stood up, wished him a good night and left the casino.

The Rebbe Maharash was clearly very agitated. Reb Yeshaya Berlin later commented that he never saw the Rebbe in such an emotional state.

A few hours later the young Jewish man was seen making inquiries as to the whereabouts of the gentleman who had spoken to him in the casino. The Chasidim rushed over to show him where the Rebbe was staying, and he was admitted.

The private conversation that ensued lasted several hours. The next morning, the Rebbe Maharash left the hotel.

"It has been many generations since such a pure soul has come down to earth," the Rebbe later explained, referring to the young man. "Unfortunately, it had fallen into the depths of kelipa [the forces of evil]."

Whatever was discussed, the encounter proved to be a turning point in the young man's life. No longer estranged from Judaism, he returned to full observance of Torah and mitzvot soon afterward. Today, his descendants are G-d fearing, religious Jews.

This was the extent of the Rebbe Maharash's love for his fellow Jew, even one he had never met before.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

When a woman conceives (tazria)... (Lev. 12:2)

The Hebrew word "tazria" derives from the root "zeria," which means "sowing." Two aspects are present in sowing. Sowing is not a one-time affair, but continues to exert an effect even afterwards, similar to seeds which when sown in the ground lead to growth. The purpose of sowing is to harvest produce of a much greater amount than that sown. The lesson from this is that all aspects of man's service should be in the manner of "sowing". A Jew may not remain content with a one-time effort, but instead, that effort should produce growth. Moreover, the growth produced should be in a large amount. In the words of Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch, "A Jew should be a 'light to illuminate', giving light to other Jews, and in such a way that they in turn become 'lights to illuminate', ad infinitum" - similar to sowing seeds, which produce fruit which contain seeds, which in turn produce fruit, ad infinitum. (*Sichot Kodesh*, 5744)

And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised (Lev. 12:3)

What does the mitzvah (commandment) of brit mila (circumcision) emphasize? Brit mila draws attention to the fact that G-d did not create man in a perfect state from the womb. Just as perfection of man's physical form is by man's own hand, so is it within his means and power to complete his spiritual form by the worthiness of his actions. We learn from this mitzvah that through our actions we have the opportunity to perfect ourselves and the entire world both physically and spiritually. (*Sefer HaChinunch*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORAH

1 IYAR • 25 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:24 PM
	MINCHA:	5:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:00 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:21 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN - FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	MAARIV:	6:15 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 24 APRIL 2009



BEGINS		ENDS
5:24	MELBOURNE	6:21
5:24	ADELAIDE	6:19
5:05	BRISBANE	5:58
6:19	DARWIN	7:09
5:02	GOLD COAST	5:58
5:29	PERTH	6:23
5:05	SYDNEY	6:00
5:10	LAUNCESTON	6:09
5:27	AUCKLAND	6:23
5:21	WELLINGTON	6:19

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

יצוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.