

LSS UPDATE

LSS is closed for all services and programs, including Shabbat services and programs, until further notice.

It is our 7th shabbat apart and yet in many ways we realize how this challenging time is bringing us all closer through chesed and virtual connection.

Please see below for important Yom Tov and shabbat times.

YOM TOV AND SHABBAT TIMES

Tonight:

Today is the 15th day of the Omer, first day Rosh Chodesh Iyyar

Earliest Candle Lighting: 6:19pm

Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat: 6:45pm

Shabbat Candle Lighting: 7:28pm

Sunset (daven Mincha by): 7:45pm

Repeat Shema after 8:29pm

Count day 16 of Omer

Shabbat:

Today is the 16th Day Omer, second day Rosh Chodesh Iyyar

Latest Shema 9:27am

Latest Shacharit: 10:36am

Earliest Mincha: 1:28pm

Sunset (daven Mincha by, and begin seudah shlishit by): 7:46pm

Shabbat Ends: 8:30pm

Zoom Havdalah: 8:45pm

Count day 17 of the omer

For access to the Zoom links for Kabbalat Shabbat and Havdalah, please click the link in the electronic version of Echod.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, April 24: CommUnity Pre-Shabbat Gathering: 2:00pm

While our synagogues may be closed, our hearts are open. We invite you to join us as we gather virtually with the entire New York Jewish community for inspiration and hope before Shabbat. Featuring: **Eric S. Goldstein**, CEO, UJA-Federation of New York, **Rabbi Shaul Robinson** and **Cantor Yanky Lemmer**, Lincoln Square Synagogue, **Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky**, Ansche Chesed, **Rabbi Joy Levitt**, Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan and **Rabbi Menachem Creditor**, UJA-Federation of New York. To register, please click [here](#).

Monday, April 27: The Honey and the Sting: 12:00pm

Live, from Israel! Celebrate Yom Atzmaut with a program that tells the incredible story of the state of Israel— in happy times and in sad times—told through the life story and songs of Naomi Shemer. Naomi Shemer composed over 1000 songs -- many of them are part of Israel's fabric (think Jerusalem of Gold, Al Kol Ele, Lu Yihi). The presenter, Roy Rimshon, has dedicated his life to researching and sharing the story of her life. In this program, he will play some of her songs and explain how they tie into her life and the history of Israel. To join the program, please click [here](#).

Tuesday, April 28: LSS Community Virtual Yom HaZikaron and Tekes Ma'avar (Transition ceremony) to Yom Ha'atzmaut: 8:30pm

Join us for a special program commemorating both the soldiers of the IDF who have fallen in defense of the State of Israel and those who have been victims to acts of terror. The program will be followed by Ma'ariv and Hallel, led by Chazzan Yanky Lemmer, marking the beginning of Yom Ha'atzmaut. To join the program, please click [here](#).

ROSH CHODESH

Rosh Chodesh Iyyar will be today, Friday, April 24 and Shabbat, April 25.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Though we will not be joining together for communal kiddushim, we want to take this opportunity to list those sponsors that had every intention of sponsoring. We wish Mazal Tov's to those celebrating and Elyui Neshamot to those who are commemorating the loss of a loved one. May we very soon have the zechut again to share together in smachot and, lo'alenu, if difficult times befall, may we at the very least have the zechut to take comfort in coming together.

Beginners Kiddush: Helga Weisburger in commemoration of the yahrtzeit of her beloved mother, Kreindel bat Chana a"h and in honor of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald.

HAKARAT HATOV

Judy Sokolow for writing this week's Dvar Torah.

WEEKLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

For access to all the Zoom links for these classes, please visit www.lss.org/learningopportunities.

Sunday:

- **Sunday Morning Responsa** with Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld: 10:15am

Monday:

- **Jewish Living Workshop: 7:30pm-8:30pm** led by Dassa and Bill Greenbaum. The Jewish Living Workshop, a 9 session series, is a "hands-on" experience. We learn by doing. The workshop is free, a few sessions will require a modest fee for materials. To register, please email JLworkshop@yahoo.com.
- **Deep Calling Unto Deep: led by Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld: 7:45pm-8:30pm**

Tuesday:

- **The Marilyn & Sam Isler, "Studies in the weekly Parsha"** led by Rabbi Shaul Robinson: 10:30am— 11:30am.
- **Beit Midrash night, The M'lachim (Kings) Study Group** led by Ron Platzer: 7:30pm-8:30pm.

Wednesday:

- **Conversations and Covenant: The Halacha, History, and Science of being Jewish** led by Rabbinic Intern, Tzvi Benoff: 12:00pm. Topic: Antiochu's Indian Exiles: The Bene Israel from Maimonides to Rabbi Herzog

Thursday:

- **The Jacob Adler Parsha Class** Explorations in the Weekly Parsha led by Rabbi Shaul Robinson: 7:00pm-8:00pm.
- ***(Please note the date change) Chug Ivrit led by Harel Fenigstein:** 7:00pm-8:15pm. In this class, we read articles from the Israeli press, watch videos of news stories, documentaries and comedy clips, listen to (and sing along!) to Israeli songs and chat in Ivrit. This year, we will have a special focus on Israeli poetry.
- ***(Please note the date change) Jewish History Course led by Paul Shaviv:** 8:00pm-9:00pm

MISHNAH LEARNING COORDINATOR

Every year, members of Lincoln Square Synagogue learn, among themselves, the entire mishna before Shavuot. We are looking for volunteers to organize this year's learning.

For more information, please contact rabbi@lss.org.

DVAR TORAH

Parshat Tazria-Metzora

April 24-25

By: Judy Sokolow

Tzara'at is one of several afflictions (nega'im) mentioned in this week's parashi'ot. It is the best known of the bunch because it has a whole parashah named after it, arguably because, as per its translation in the New Testament, it was thought to be the known disease leprosy (Hansen's disease), which it is not. It manifested as discoloration on fabrics or leather and on walls of houses and, in its most acute form, as a scaly scourge deep within the skin; indeed, the Greek word lepra is associated with husks or scales. (Note courtesy of Gideon Schor that the Septuagint uses a form of the word lepra for the scales of a fish in the laws of kashrut.)

Interestingly, determining whether a particular blotch was truly tzara'at was the responsibility of a kohen and the rabbis concluded that it was a consequence of sin. Various situations in the Bible recounting that someone who lied while speaking evil of others then exhibited tzara'at support the conclusion that it was sometimes the punishment for lashon hara. [1] As is stated in Ruth Rabbah 2:10, the sinner was given a chance to repent:

First, they [the nega'im such as tzara'at] descend upon one's house. If he repents, well and good; if not, the stones have to be removed. If he repents, well and good; if not they have to be burned. After that, the afflictions beset his body. If he repents, well and good; if not, the kohen comes and goes. If he repents, well and good; if not, "he shall dwell alone making his residence outside the camp." [2]

But why was the metzora isolated? "He separated between a husband and his wife, between a man and his friend [by his slander] therefore the Torah said, "he shall dwell alone" (Arachin 16b) [3]. Furthermore, tzara'at was considered an impurity akin to death, and as such he could not be tolerated inside the camp. Why not? Because God dwells among the Jewish people and the camp had to be kept pure. [4]

So what was the slanderer to do while in isolation outside the camp? He was to treat his affliction through atonement. According to the Sefer HaChinukh, mitzvah 169: "By means of the priest's guidance and advice, and by a searching of his deeds he will be able to remove the plague from himself, because G-d, blessed be He, whose surveillance is always upon him, will take notice of this act of repentance and will heal him." [5]

Once the priest declared him cured, the metzora had to bring a sin offering but could not do so in an impure state; thus, a purification ritual was required. This was a complicated procedure that can, more or less, be described as follows: The kohen slaughtered a pure bird and poured its blood into a dish containing water to which he added cedar wood, a crimson wool thread and hyssop ("Cedar trees are the natural symbols of great stature, while a clump of grass is the quintessence of lowliness. Their combination... emphasizes his need to learn humility. The crimson thread [represented] the equivalence between slander and spilling blood." [6]) He dipped a second bird into this solution and let it fly off, so as to take the impurities with it. (Arachin 16b answers the question, why birds? "The Holy One Blessed Be He said: He acted as a babblers, therefore let him offer a babblers, birds that babble, as a sacrifice." [7])

He then sprinkled the metzora with the mixture seven times after which the metzora entered the camp to launder his clothes, shave all his hair and bathe, but he could not enter his residence for seven days. The metzora then brought oil and sheep to the sanctuary (or birds if he was poor) as offerings. Blood was placed on his extremities: right ear lobe, right thumb, and right big toe, signifying that his whole body was purified. But the metzora was required to bring yet another sacrifice, this one to restore the sanctity of the sanctuary which had become defiled on his account. "This way the ritual serves to educate the individual with respect to his obligations toward the generality." [8]

When I signed up to write this Dvar Torah several months ago, who would have thought that I would be writing about the use of isolation in the Torah as we ourselves are experiencing social distancing and many are suffering from loneliness. May I make the following observations: We learn from the metzora that isolation as a result of an affliction is not for naught but is to be put to good use. As we try to bring meaning to the anguish in us and around us, we are often advised that asking why G-d allows such human suffering is an exercise in frustration and futility; rather, we are told to ask what we can do to help alleviate the suffering. Perhaps the second question is the answer to the first. As was the case with the metzora who needed to contemplate his actions towards others, is that not what most if not all of us who, thank G-d, are healthy, are doing right now? How are we transforming ourselves during this crisis? Suffering breaks hearts but it also breaks them "open to new capacity." [9] As noted above, the last step in the metzora's purification ritual was not on his own behalf; rather, it served the community. May our hearts remain open to others as we become more introspective, more sensitive and gain more wisdom, and may G-d give us, each in our own way, the strength and courage to continue. And thank you to LSS for lighting the way.

Shabbat Shalom

I share with you below the secondary sources in which I found the primary sources that I used. Seeing them in context might be of further interest:

- [1] Dr. Meir Gruzman, in his article "The Opinions of our Sages on Leprosy as A Punishment--Extents and Sources," notes that not all speakers of evil contracted tzara'at and maintained that, if the evil speech was true, its speakers were not thus afflicted.
<https://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng/tazria/gruzman.html>
- [2] Moshe Sokolow, Studies in the Weekly Parashah, p.163.
- [3] Gruzman
- [4] Ed Greenstein. "Purification of the Leper--Its Spiritual Significance,"
<https://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng/metzora/gre.html>
- [5] Gerson Appel. Philosophy of Mitzvot, p. 161.
- [6] Sokolow, p.165.
- [7] Gruzman
- [8] Greenstein
- [9] David Brooks. The Second Mountain, p. 68.

DVAR TORAH

We are currently looking for writers for:

Shabbat Shavuot (5/30), Parshat Shelach (6/20), Parshat Korach (6/27)

If interested, please email Bill Greenbaum at dvar@lss.org.

**In case of a bereavement, please call
our Clergy at 646-543-7485
(day or night)**

**If you would like to receive the
Shabbat Echod by e-mail,
sign up at www.lss.org.**

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