



# Shabbat Metzora

## April 9, 2011

### 5 Nissan, 5771

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## NEWS

### PURIM IN ST. PETERSBURG AND NEW PORT RICHEY FL

We have some faithful leaders who send us regularly news about their congregation, maybe the most actives of our leaders. Jeff is one of them. He is the Pastor Rabbi of two Jewish Adventsit congregations in Florida, one in St. Peterburg and the second one in New Port Richey. Here is a news about their Purim celebration.



“We had a fun time during Purim at both locations. The New Port Richey youth department put on a play for St. Petersburg congregation on Friday and for New Port Richey congregation on Saturday.

About 50 people between the two locations dressed up in a wide array of customs. It was

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wonderful to have Adam and Eve with us, as well as Balaam and his (her) donkey, Bathsheba, Delilah, Martha, Lydia, the Bride of Messiah, the women at the well, Esther’s chef, Noah, a couple of Esther (not Easter) bunnies left over from Noah’s Ark, a Roman soldier, one of the wise men from the East, an angel, David with his sling, Simon carrying the cross beam for Y’shua, Rebecca at the well, several Esthers, Mordecais, and kings. Everyone enjoyed the various flavored hamantashan.



The message accompanying the play was a comparison of the story of Purim with the second beast mentioned in Rev 13 and with world events today and near future regarding America in prophecy. The message went over very well even with about 50% of the attendees being guests.



# OVERVIEW

## METZORA

### LEVITICUS 14:1-15:33

**T**he Torah describes the procedure for a metzora (a person afflicted with tzara'at) upon conclusion of his isolation. This process extends for a week and involves korbanot and immersions in the mikveh. Then, a kohen must pronounce the metzora pure. A metzora of limited financial means may substitute lesser offerings for the more expensive animals.

Before a kohen diagnoses that a house has tzara'at, household possessions are removed to prevent them from also being declared ritually impure. The tzara'at is removed by smashing and rebuilding that section of the house. If it reappears, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details those bodily secretions that render a person spiritually impure, thereby preventing his contact with holy items, and the Torah defines how one regains a state of ritual purity.

### REMEMBER MIRIAM

**A**ccording to the Jewish tradition leprosy and other skin diseases are associated with misuse of speech (gossip and slander). "This shall be the law of the leper" (Mezora) means, of him that utters evil reports,' (Midrash Rabbah - Vayikra 16:6). That is why even Miriam, Moses' sister, got leprosy when she spoke wrongly about her brother and his wife. Rabbi Marozov says "The importance of refraining from speaking about others can also be seen from the commandment of the Torah "Remember what the L-rd your G-d did unto Miriam on the way, as you came out of Egypt" (Deut. 24:9). The Torah refers to a discussion that Miriam had with her brother Aaron. In the course of the discussion, Miriam spoke negatively about her brother Moshe. As a result, she became leprous (tzara'at). The Torah commands us to continuously remember this episode so that we too should refrain from speaking negative about others."

## TEN WAYS TO EVOID GOSSIP

**I**read this week on Internet (aish.com) this list of ten ways to eliminate gossip. They are given by Rabbi Pakouz which were taken from the book of Lori Palatnik and Bob Berg. It seems to me important to meditate on them, because we have seen in the parashot Tazria and Metzora that leprosy and some other skin diseases could be in the time of the bible consequences of gossip or slander (*lashon hara*). According to the Torah law saying anything derogatory about anyone, whether the derogatory information is true or not is forbidden as *lashon hara*, (evil speech).

Scientist today have discovered the consequence of bad thinking and feeling on the body, they produce psychosomatic illness. The "illness" of Gossip exists today in every community and we should learn from the Jewish people how to avoid gossip and slander in our own communities.

**1. SPEAK NO EVIL.** Say only positive statements. Let words of kindness be on your tongue. This means to respond instead of react. Edit your speech before you speak.

**2. HEAR NO EVIL.** Refuse to listen to gossip, slander and other negative forms of speech. If you're on a diet, don't bring the cake and cookies into the house. If you're ending gossip, try and keep away from conversations that may tempt you to listen or chime in. If avoiding the conversation is impossible, have another topic of "positive" interest you can quickly bring up in order to change the subject.

**3. SEE NO EVIL.** Judge people favorably, the way you would want them to judge you. If you've ever been accused of doing something for which you know you were innocent, then you know how it feels to be misjudged. Remember, if you weren't there, you don't know. Even if you were there, you may have missed the context of what actually happened.

**4. DON'T RATIONALIZE DESTRUCTIVE SPEECH.** Excuses like "But it's true" or "I'm only joking" or "I can tell my spouse anything" just don't cut it. Gossip is gossip. The fact that it is true is what qualifies it as gossip. If it were not true, it would be libel or slander, depending upon the medium.

**5. BEWARE OF SPEAKING EVIL WITHOUT SAYING AN EVIL WORD.** Body language even with positive speech can bring tremendous destruction.

**6. BE HUMBLE.** Avoid Arrogance. These will be

your greatest weapons against destructive speech. Take pleasure in your accomplishments, not pride. This way you recognize the Ultimate Source of your accomplishments. Those who are arrogant are so full of themselves, that there is no room for God in their lives.

**7. BEWARE OF REPEATING INFORMATION.** Even positive information needs permission before being repeated. Telling someone who's out of a job that your mutual friend got a raise, does not constitute proper speech.

**8. HONESTY REALLY IS THE BEST POLICY - MOST OF THE TIME.** Be careful to always tell the truth unless it will hurt others or violate privacy. Strive for honesty in everything you do. If being honest means unnecessarily hurting another's feelings, it's better not to be so truthful. Those who boast about being "brutally honest" are usually more brutal than honest.

**9. LEARN TO SAY, "I'M SORRY."** Everyone makes mistakes. If you've spoken badly about someone, clear it up immediately. It might be embarrassing, but get it over with quickly. Apologize, ask for forgiveness, and let him or her know it won't happen again.

**10. FORGIVE.** If you have been wronged, let it go. Forgive for your sake, if not for theirs. Those who can forgive live healthier, happier, and less stressful lives. Those who say they'll forgive but not forget are actually saying that they'll neither forgive nor forget. (Lori Palatnik and Bob Berg. *GOSSIP: Ten Pathways To Eliminate It From Your Life And Transform Your Soul*. Simcha Press. Deerfield, FL.)

## A SIN AGAINST THE SOCIETY

**T**he Torah teaches us that the Metzora must remain in isolation, away from human contact. The Talmud explains that a Metzora is guilty of anti-social behavior and therefore he must be separated from the society.

## PESACH

**L**ooking carefully at the date of this newsletter/parasha you will notice that we have entered the month of Nissan. Every attentive reader of the Bible knows that this month is the month of the Passover which is on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan. This year it will be on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April and the Eve of Pesach (Erev Pesach) on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April.

Due to its special place in the history of G-d's people, G-d designated Nissan as the "first month of all months of the year." It is the true and biblical New Year, not the month of Tishri which is always numbered in the Bible as the seventh month of the year.

Nissan is the month of redemption of Israel "par excellence" (French). First G-d redeemed Israel from the bondage of Egypt and secondly according to our sages, it is the month in which the Jewish people are redeemed through the Mashiach (Messiah). It was the exact time Yeshua choose to redeem us from our bondage of sins. This redemption is clearly stated in the *Haggadah shel Pesach* that every family will read on the two first night of Passover (April 18 and 19). If you don't have the opportunity to read and meditate on the *Haggadah* for this Passover, maybe you can try to find a Jewish Adventist community close to your home and read it with them.

Pesach is a joyful feast which celebrate the delivrance from Egypt, it is a very idea to send cards of wish saying *Chag Pesach Sameach*, (Happy Feast of Passover) from now, when you meet your Jewish friends, say to them "Chag Sameach" this can be done until the last day of the feasst which will be on April 26, 27 (it depends on the respective tradition and if you live in Eretz Israel or in the diaspora).

## HUMILITY

**T**he holiday of Pesach, when we are prohibited to eat or even posses chametz (leaven), teaches us a similar lesson. Both matzah and chametz are made

from the same ingredients - flour and water - yet matzah is flat, while bread rises. The Pesach matzah teaches a person the importance of humility and the prohibition of haughtiness.

## TO MEDITATE

"Words are the most intoxicating drug in the universe!" (Rudyard Kipling)

"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit!" (Shlomo Hamelech in Proverbs 18:21)

## PRAYING OR READING FAST

One day after prayers, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev went over to one of the people in the minyan (quorum) and gave him the traditional “Shalom Aleichem” greeting that we give to someone who just returned from a trip.

“But Rabbi, I didn’t travel anywhere,” protested the man. “Why do you greet me this way?”

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak replied, “I watched the way you prayed and I realized that you were somewhere else.. You were in the city of Leiptzig at the fair, during your prayer, thinking about business... so I’m welcoming you back to town!”

“Why is it,” asked a Rabbi, “that a person will so often think about his business during prayers, yet, seldom think about prayers during business?”

On the lighter side: The rabbi and Yankel, the local wagon driver, would pray at the same time each day in synagogue. But Yankel would finish his prayers much before the rabbi.

“I can’t understand how you pray so fast,” the rabbi said to Yankel. “I’m the rabbi and I should be able to read better than you, yet it takes me longer to recite the prayers. How do you explain this?”

“It’s very simple,” replied Yankel. “We both went to cheder as children, at the age of five, to learn to read. Tell me Rabbi, how long did you spend with the teacher who taught you to read?”

“About a half a year, then I went on to a higher class to study the Chumash (Bible),” replied the rabbi.

“Ah, now it’s simple! You only spent six months learning to read, but I was kept back in the reading class for three years! So, naturally, I can read better than you!”

## THE WISE AND THE WICKED ONE

In a small town there lived a poor Jew. He barely saved up enough money to buy matzah and wine for Pesach. A few weeks before the holiday, there was a sale on clothing material. He couldn’t resist the thought of a new dress for his wife and a new suit for himself, so he took all the money and bought the material.

When he told his wife what he did, she was

furious. “How will we have wine, matzah and all other provisions for Pesach? Go at once and give the material back! If the storekeeper gives you trouble, say that the material is damaged!” The man did as his wife told him.

He came to the store, threw the material on the table and declared, “The material you sold me is no good, I want my money back!” To his surprise, the merchant didn’t argue and returned his money.

After he left, another customer came and brought back some material. He spread the material out on the table and pointed out flaws in the fabric. The merchant took his time and showed him that they were not flaws but rather part of the pattern and design and the customer went away happy.

The merchant was asked, “Why did you take your time with the second customer to show him that the material was good, yet the first customer you gave the money back right away? The merchant replied, “The trouble with the first one was not the material, but the customer himself. He didn’t point out the flaws in the material. He just said that it was no good. I knew then that there was no point in arguing or persuading him. I saw that he didn’t want the material at all!”

The same, explains the Magid, is the difference between the wise son and the wicked one. The wise son wants to observe the Torah and thus points out which parts are difficult for him to understand and wants an answer. The wicked son, however, makes a blanket statement, “Of what purpose is this service to you?” His is a statement in the form of a question.

In other words, the wise son’s question is a question for which he is seeking an answer. But the wicked son’s “question” is actually his “answer” — an excuse for not observing the mitzvot.

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A newsletter published by the  
World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center  
Under the umbrella of the  
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# HAFTARA

## 2 Kings 7:3-20

**PARASHA:** In the text of parasha *Metzora* we have the description of the procedure to be declared leprous and to be declared clean. Even though the Jewish tradition says that it is not leprosy all the symptom of this sickness look like leprosy

**HAFTARA MEZTZORA:** Leprous men (2 Kings 7) are ready to accept their fate and to die, but before dying they want to help G-d's people in their war against the Syrians. "Now there were four leprous men outside the city gate, who said to one another, 'Why should we sit here until we die? If we say, 'Let us enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there... (2 Kings 7:3-4). Usually, in Israel leprous are unclean people, people considered as cursed by the L-rd. But the story of this Haftara shows us a complete different perception of leprous, and these four men are going to be used by the L-rd to deliver Israel from her enemy and their army. "For the L-rd had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots, and of horses, the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, 'The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to fight against us.'" So they fled away in the twilight and abandoned their tents, their horses, and their donkeys leaving the camp just as it was, and fled for their lives (2Kings 7:6-7).

After eating and drinking in the tents of their enemies they decided to go to the Jewish camp and to say to the king of Israel what happened, "So they went after them as far as the Jordan; the whole way was littered with garments and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned, and told the king" (2Kings 7:15). Israel was saved. It is a great lesson for us, how many times we have some prejudices against some people, thinking that in their condition they can be blessed or even be a blessing for anyone. But the Lord like to surprise us and to take some special ways we have not thought before.

# BRIT HACHADASHA

## Luke 17:12-19

The parasha speaks to us about the Metzora a skin disease which is very often associated with leprosy. We also have all the procedure to be cleansed by the Cohen in order to reintegrate the kahal (assembly) of Israel.

It is interesting to see that Yeshua had the power to clean any disease, and specially leprosy. We have at least four texts in the Besorat-Yeshua where he cleansed people from leprosy. Matt 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-16; Luke 17:12-19. In each of these texts Yeshua is very respectful of the Torah and the authority of the Cohanim, he always said to the lepers after healing them "But go, show yourself to the Cohen (priest) and offer the korbanot (sacrifices) that Moshe commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." (Mark 1:44) Yeshua was a Jew and accepted the law of Moses as the Law of G-d, that's why he invited his hearers to be faithful to the Torah.

Coming back to the text of Luke we see that leprous were present all over the country, that is why we have these four narration in the gospel. In our text it was not one leper who came to Yeshua but 10. In that time they believed that Leprosy was a contagious sickness (today we know that it is not the case). They lived outside of society, they were together, everyone who has seen the movie Ben Hur, remember how the mother and sister of Ben Hur were living in a cave just before being healed by Yeshua.

What is important here is that the healing power of Yeshua is an effective sign that the age of messianic salvation has come. He is the Messiah and wants to demonstrate it by his actions. That is why when Yochanan Hamatbil (John the Baptist) had some doubts that Yeshua was the Messiah, Yeshua took his healing power as one of the proofs that he was the Messiah "Go back and report to Yochanan what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." (Luke 7:22)

