

# תַּזְרִיעַ מְצֹרָה

## TAZRIA METZORA

In loving memory of Malka bat Peretz



**Volume 32 | #31**

25 April 2020  
1 Iyar 5780

**Shabbat ends:**

London 9.06pm  
Sheffield 9.25pm  
Edinburgh 9.42pm  
Birmingham 9.16pm  
Jerusalem 7.54pm

**Rosh Chodesh Iyar**

Yom Hazikaron starts  
on Monday night.  
Yom Ha'atzmaut starts  
on Tuesday night.

Please look regularly at the social media and websites of the US, Tribe and your community for ongoing updates relating to Coronavirus as well as educational programming and community support.

You do not need to sign into Facebook to access the US Facebook page. The US Coronavirus Helpline is on 020 8343 5696.

May God bless us and the whole world.

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Maftir p. 890  
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# Daf Hashavua

## יום העצמאות שגת!

### YOM HA'ATZMAUT SAMEACH!



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# Sidra breakdown

## תַּזְרִיעַ מְצֹרָה

### Tazria Metzora

4th & 5th Sidrot in:

## ויקרא

### Vayikra

By Numbers:

**157 verses**  
**2,444 words**  
**8,364 letters**

Headlines:

## Laws of 'tzara'at' and purification



### United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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# Changing Eyes

By Rabbi Daniel Sturgess, St Albans United Synagogue



The main focus of the first of this week's two sidrot, Tazria, is tzara'at, a skin disease which was the physical manifestation of a spiritual malady.

The Talmud cites several possible causes for this disease, most notably lashon hara – damaging speech. The contaminated person's 'punishment' was to live outside the camp for seven days (Vayikra 13:46). This gave the offender the opportunity to reflect on what it means to live with people, to be part of a community. The isolation would convey the message that if you cannot speak positively about people, then you cannot be amongst them.

Tzara'at is repeatedly referred to in the Torah as "negah tzara'at", meaning 'the affliction of tzara'at' (see *ibid.* 13:2). The word negah in

fact comes from the root lingoah – to touch. When you want to get someone's attention, you might call their name; if they don't hear you, you might touch them on the shoulder to get their attention. With negah tzara'at, God was getting the person's attention, letting them know that something was not quite right. In a sense, this was actually a positive thing, as it gave the person the opportunity to go outside the camp, to reflect and to correct their mistakes.

Some commentators say that the destructive trait underlying lashon hara is ayin ra – a negative perspective, literally a 'bad eye'. Often one speaks badly of another person having first viewed them in a negative light. Therefore, to turn things around, one needs to change this way of looking at people, and the world. The

## Sidra Summary

### 1st Aliya (Kohen) – Vayikra 12:1-23

After childbirth, a lady would wait several weeks before bringing an elevation offering (olah) and a sin offering (chatat). This completed her post-birth purification process.

God told Moshe and Aharon that someone who had the appearance of a particular type of skin disease (tzara'at) would have to show the white blemish to a Kohen. The Kohen would evaluate and decide if the affliction was clearly tzara'at, thus rendering the person impure (tameh). If the case was unclear, the Kohen would quarantine the person in a house for seven days, after which the Kohen would re-inspect the afflicted area and declare whether the person was tameh or tahor (pure).



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There is a hint to this at the end of Tazria. After two consecutive seven day periods in isolation, the person with tzara'at returns to the Kohen. If the Kohen sees that the affliction has not improved, this indicates on a deeper level that the person has not learned his lesson. The verse

says, "lo hafach hanegah et ayino", meaning 'the affliction has not changed its appearance' (ibid. 13:55). However, the literal translation of ayino is 'his eye'. On a deeper level, the verse is saying that the one with the affliction had not changed his ayin – his 'eye', his perspective. Since he did not make the necessary change in his life, he remains

contaminated.

Interestingly, the words negah (נגיח) and oneg (ענג), meaning delight, share the same letters, implying a connection. The difference between the words is the position of the letter ayin (א) hinting to the idea that if a person with a negah – affliction, changes his ayin – his 'eye' i.e. his perspective, the result can be delight.

Nowadays, we do not have tzara'at to alert us to a change we may need to make, but God still finds ways of 'touching us' to get our attention. By changing our perspective and developing a 'good eye', we can potentially change difficulty into delight and celebration.

## In loving memory of Avraham ben Yehoshua

### 2nd Aliya (Levi) – 13:24-39

It was also possible for tzara'at to develop from a burn. Tzara'at could erupt on the scalp or on the beard area, causing a loss of hair.

### 3rd Aliya (Shlishi) – 13:40-54

A slightly different form of tzara'at is detailed, which caused a more substantial loss of hair. A metzora (one who has been contaminated with tzara'at) was sent outside of the camp and had to tear his/her garments (see p4 article). Tzara'at could also infect clothing. A suspected garment was quarantined before the Kohen made a decision about whether it was tameh. If it was declared tameh, the garment was burnt.

### 4th Aliya (Revi'i) – 13:55-14:20

The Torah details the process through which a metzora purified himself/herself after the period of isolation and the healing of the affliction. This involved a Kohen taking two birds, cedar wood, a crimson thread and hyssop. The Kohen would slaughter one of the birds and – using the wood, thread and hyssop together in a bundle – sprinkle their blood seven times on the metzora. The metzora would also bring three animal offerings and three meal offerings.

**Point to Consider:** what is the significance of the cedar wood, crimson thread and hyssop? (see Rashi to 14:4)



# A Dream Fulfilled

Rabbi Bentzi Mann, Mill Hill East Jewish Community



Growing up in Israel, there is one Yom Ha'atzmaut moment I particularly remember. I was in my early teens, living in Jerusalem. It was the night of Yom Ha'atzmaut and I was on my way to my shul's holiday Maariv prayer, dressed smartly as I would for yomtov.

I bumped into my sister and her friend and wished them Chag Sameach, the greeting usually reserved for yomtov. My sister replied warmly but her friend just looked very surprised. The utterly bewildered look on the friend's face and her comment to my sister - "Did he actually mean what he just said?" - has stuck with me to this day. Especially since I did mean what I said!

Perhaps, though, my sister's friend was partially correct. An Independence Day is undoubtedly important in national life, so much so that according to the journalist Max Fisher ([www.vox.com](http://www.vox.com)), the only two countries without such a day are the UK and Denmark! Yet, even with prayers and not just parties, is Yom Ha'atzmaut - Independence Day - special enough to be called a Chag, a term which is usually reserved for yomtov?

Perhaps one way to approach this question is through understanding the background to the State of Israel, stretching back to Biblical times.

The political scientist and historian, Benedict Anderson (1936 – 2015), in his book about nationalism, Imagined

**Am Yisrael is not a new nation, but we are celebrating something deep – the fulfilment of the dreams of millions of Jews over 2000 years...**

Communities, views a "nation" as a relatively new idea, which is a product of different socio-material forces. Anderson says that although "nations" are similar to "peoples," nations "have no clearly identifiable births."

This may very well apply to many nations today, but clearly not to Bnei Yisrael, the Jewish people, and especially its link to the Land of Israel.

Towards the end of the Torah, when Bnei Yisrael prepared to enter the Land of Israel, at Arvat Moav (the plains of Moab), God made a new covenant with them, in addition to the covenant made earlier at Mount Sinai. At that time, the Torah states: "Today you have become a nation of the Lord your God" (Devarim 27:9)

The earlier generation which left Egypt received the Torah at Mt. Sinai. The 40 years in the desert were a transition. Only "today", though, was the process of leaving Egypt complete, in the sense that the new generation was

about to enter the Land of Israel.

Rabbi Yehuda Loew, (1520-1609), the famous rabbi of Prague, also known by the acronym Maharal, in chapter 6 of his work Netiv Hatzedakah, described the impact of this later covenant as follows: "Israel became connected, to fully be one nation, only when they came to the Land and were together in the Land... and by means of the Land they are fully one nation."

They entered the Land and became a sovereign nation with great prophets, kings and leaders. Whilst some sinned and were corrupt, the Jewish nation was under Jewish leadership in the Land of Israel, even when split into two kingdoms.

However, with the destruction of the Temple, the Jewish nation was in exile for almost 2000 years, experiencing expulsions, pogroms and much more. Suddenly, only 3 years after the Holocaust, when our spiritual, physical and emotional states were at their lowest, the dream of 2000 years came true – we are once again a nation in its homeland under Jewish leadership.

Am Yisrael is not a new nation, but we are celebrating something deep – the fulfilment of the dreams of millions of Jews over 2000 years, to return to our land and build a Jewish state.

On the way to shul on that Yom Ha'atzmaut years ago, I passed my Bubby's house and thought of her son, my great uncle Moshe Yehoshua, who was murdered by the Nazis at the age of two. He never had the privilege to live in or even see the State of Israel. I "said" chag sameach to him and felt him responding with a heart-felt "chag sameach"!

**In memory of Harav Binyamin ben Harav Shalom**

# The amazing Asher Asher



by Simon Goulden, Education Consultant to the United Synagogue



Although Asher Asher was perhaps one of the most important figures in the early history of the United Synagogue, you may never have heard of him.

Born in Glasgow in 1837, he was educated at the Royal High School in Glasgow. He became a prominent member of the local Jewish congregation and acted as its Honorary Secretary. He studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh, graduating in 1856, the first ever Jewish doctor in Scotland. He practiced in Glasgow and the nearby mining town of Bishopbriggs.

In 1862, Asher moved to London and became medical officer of the Jewish Board of Guardians (now Jewish Care), where he helped provide medical care for poor Jews, alongside the founder, Dr. Canstatt. In 1866, he was appointed secretary of the Great Synagogue, the major Ashkenazi synagogue in the City. As we have learned, it was at about this time that the idea of a union of the various London synagogues was put forward, chiefly by Lionel L. Cohen,

**It was he who wrote the introduction to the by-laws of the constituent synagogues, and practically founded the United Synagogue Visitation Committee...**

one of the 'Grand Dukes' of Anglo Jewry. Asher, acting as his 'right hand man', devoted himself to the project with intense energy. Thus, in March, 1870, he became First Secretary of the United Synagogue, contributing largely to its success. It was he who wrote the introduction to the by-laws of the constituent synagogues, and practically founded the United Synagogue Visitation Committee, devoting himself to the welfare of Jewish prisoners and the poor. This office he retained until his death, at the young age of 52, in 1889.

Asher's close connection with the Rothschilds in his capacity as medical attendant, and personal friend meant that his advice was generally followed

by them in communal matters. He was also connected with a large number of institutions in the London Jewish community. Looking for better conditions for Jewish immigrants, Asher undertook journeys to Palestine, the United States and Russia in the company of Samuel Montagu, whom he managed to reconcile with Lord Rothschild. Asher was also concerned about the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. After the visit to Palestine, he wrote a report on the conditions in Jerusalem, which generated much positive action. His sympathetic nature attracted to him most of the young men of ability of the rising generation whilst his scholarship was notable, in both English and Hebrew. He wrote a book called *The Jewish Rite of Circumcision* (1873). Asher wrote frequently for the Jewish press, chiefly under the pen name of "Aliquis."

In his memory, since 1910, the University of Glasgow awards the Asher Asher Memorial Medal and Prize, annually for its Ear, Nose and Throat course. He is buried in Willesden Cemetery.

## In memory of Chaim ben Moshe Bentzion

### 5th Aliya (Chamishi) – 14:21-32

A metzora who could not afford three animal offerings could instead bring one animal offering, one meal offering and two birds.

### 6th Aliya (Shishi) – 14:33-15:15

Tzara'at also affected houses. The house owner would report the suspicious signs to a Kohen. The house would be evacuated before the Kohen's arrival. If the Kohen saw a

deep green or deep red 'affliction', he would order the house to be quarantined for a week. He would then re-inspect the house. If the affliction had spread, the infected stones would be removed and replaced. If the affliction nevertheless returned, the house would be demolished. However, if replacing the stones solved the problem, the Kohen would declare the house tahor (pure).

The Torah lists specific discharges that would cause a man to be considered tameh, and details the purification procedure.

# Yom Hazikaron

Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg, Magen Avot Synagogue



If you have not experienced it first-hand it is hard to imagine. On Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Remembrance Day for fallen soldiers and victims of terror, for one minute in the evening and then again for two minutes in the morning, the entire country literally comes to a standstill. Air-raid sirens wail throughout the land and everything comes to a halt. Whether at home, or even driving on the motorways, everyone stops and stands together in respectful silence, remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the State of Israel and its citizens.

Those three minutes might be the closest that Israel today gets to the sense of unity that permeated the Jewish people so long ago at Har Sinai. When the Torah describes Bnei Yisrael's encampment before receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, it refers to them in the singular (יחן שם ישראל) – "נגד ההר" – "Israel encamped (singular) there in front of the mountain", Shemot 19:2). Rashi (1040-1105) famously comments that this phrase is used because they were "as one people with one heart".

On Yom Hazikaron, for very different reasons, so many differences are swept aside as we stand as one people with one broken heart, remembering the fallen.

There is something unique about the timing of Yom Hazikaron. Barely 24 hours after it begins, while the country's flags are still at half-mast, the sombre mood makes way for the celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's independence day. In a sudden and almost cruel switch of emotions, grief turns to joy. I believe that the message in the seemingly unnatural juxtaposition of these days is twofold. First, it is intended to demonstrate that without Yom Hazikaron there could be no Yom Ha'atzmaut. Without the bravery, dedication and mesirut nefesh (self-sacrifice) of all those who fought and gave their lives, there would be no State of Israel today. With God's help, Jewish statehood in 1948 was reborn. Tragically, this included the sacrifice of all

those who gave their lives for the State and its citizens then as well as all those who have fallen since in military service or acts of terror.

They were the "silver platter", in the words of Israeli poet Natan Alterman, upon which Israel was founded. Before we can celebrate our independence we have to pay tribute to our fallen; without them we would not be able to celebrate at all.

The second message is about what we do when Yom Hazikaron is over. Just as Yom Hazikaron infuses a special type of meaning into Yom Ha'atzmaut, so too our celebration of "זה היום בו עשה ה' נגילה ונשמחה בו" – "This is the day God has made, let us rejoice and be happy on it" (Tehillim/Psalms 118: 24) - reminds us of the ultimate goal of our remembrance. Whilst we mourn and feel pain, we do not grieve for grief's sake. Rather than focusing on death we celebrate life. Yom Hazikaron, one of the most difficult days on the Jewish calendar, ultimately gives us the opportunity to draw inspiration: to remember the fallen, to

ask ourselves how to incorporate their strength into our own lives and ensure their spirit lives on.



In memory of Harav Yisrael ben Uriah

## 7th Aliya (Shevi'i) – 15:16-33

A similar set of laws is listed for a lady who has specific discharges, as well as the laws of niddah (menstruation), which form the basis of the laws of family purity.

## Mafkir – (Bemidbar 28:9-15)

The reading for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is taken from parashat Pinchas and details the additional Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh offerings in the Temple.

## Haftarah

The special haftarah for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is the last chapter of the Book of Yeshaya (Isaiah). The world is God's "throne and footstool". Trying to appease God with insincere offerings will be punished, yet one who is truly "zealous regarding God's word" will be rewarded. Those who love and are loyal to Jerusalem will enjoy the messianic future, in which they will rejoice in the rebuilt city.



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**Where**

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YOM HA'ATZMAUT: HAPPY BIRTHDAY ISRAEL!

SHALOM! THIS WEEK IS YOM HA'ATZMAUT - ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY. THIS YEAR WE ARE CELEBRATING 72 YEARS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL. WE WILL SING HALLEL, HAVE A PARTY AND ENJOY OUR FAVOURITE ISRAELI DISHES, BUT WE DECIDED TO GO ONE STAGE FURTHER.

JOIN US ON A VIRTUAL YOM HA'ATZMAUT DAY TRIP TO THE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM, CAPITAL OF ISRAEL. OUR FAVOURITE PLACE TO VISIT, OBVIOUSLY!

THE KOTEL - THE WESTERN WALL - THE HOLIEST PLACE ON EARTH FOR JEWISH PEOPLE! JEWS TRAVEL FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO PRAY AT THE KOTEL. I LOVE IT, THAT THIS IS WHERE YOU WILL FIND JEWS OF ALL DIFFERENT TYPES AND STRIPES.

שוק

THE SHUK - CHECK OUT THE SIGHTS AND SMELLS IN THE PULSING SHUK OR MARKET. BARGAIN AS YOU TRY ISRAEL'S FOOD AND PRODUCE, FRESH HUMMUS WITH HOT PITA, JAFFA ORANGES, OLIVES ANYONE? AS FOR THE ROGELACH...

MT. HERZL - MILITARY CEMETERY. WE'LL BE PAYING OUR RESPECTS TO THE SOLDIERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES DEFENDING THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

KNESSET - ISRAEL'S PARLIAMENT. THIS IS WHERE ALL THE POLITICS HAPPENS.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ISRAEL - YOM HULEDET SAMEACH!



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