

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



March 25, 2023

VaYikra

3 Nissan, 5783

Thinking About Spring

Gardening supply stores (in the northern hemisphere) have been encouraging us to think about spring for quite a while already. If you haven't yet ordered your seeds from Burpee, it's too late. Planning in advance and preparing for spring, way before the threat of frost is even over, is a necessity for the serious gardener.

Springtime also happens to bring with it one of the most colorful, widely observed, and vividly recalled Jewish holidays - Passover. In fact, one of the three names by which Passover is mentioned in the Bible is "The Holiday of Spring."

Our Sages enjoin us to begin preparing for each holiday thirty days before the festival begins. When our Sages made this suggestion, they had in mind learning the laws pertaining to the holiday. Many people use this 30-day guideline as a reminder that it's time to start at least thinking about cleaning the house for Passover

Cleaning for Passover and ridding the house of chametz (leavened foods) needn't include "spring cleaning." (Though for some, the smell of Murphy's Oil Soap or Lestoil are just as bound up with Passover as say, matza ball soup and horseradish.) But, you might be surprised to note that the cleaning connected to Passover has a spiritual side as well.

According to Chasidic philosophy, bread and chametz symbolize the egotism and haughtiness within each of us. Chametz puffs up like a haughty person's chest, swells like an egotistical person's head. Matza, on the other hand, is flat, low, humble. Even the fact that its flavor is bland and nearly tasteless, attests to its modesty.

Before Passover, when we are checking cabinets and corners, looking behind bookcases and inside briefcases for chametz, we are laboring at a job that requires minimal brain-work. Which means that we have plenty of time to contemplate whether we've been behaving like chametz or matza for the past year.

And if we find that we are full of chametz, then pre-Passover cleaning time is the perfect opportunity to check the closets and corners of our own personalities in order to begin ridding ourselves of these traits.

More likely than not, most of us need these few weeks of preparation and cleansing in order to make sure that our homes, and we, are truly clean and ready for Passover.

But amidst all the physical and spiritual cleaning, don't forget to start making plans for where you'll be celebrating the seders. Also, check out your local supermarket or grocery store and see if they are stocking what you need for the eight-day holiday. If they don't have everything, find out who does. In addition, call your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center or Judaica store to order Shmura matza - the special hand-made matza that is produced with tender loving care just like the Jews ate when they came out of Egypt.

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Trickle Down Theory

The process of sinning and repenting ascends to a different level in this week's portion. In addition to the regular steps of penitence, the Torah commands that the sinner must bring a korban, an animal sacrifice to atone for his sin. This ritual encompasses many deep philosophical and psychological ramifications that are discussed in detail by the great thinkers of the 12th century, among them Rambam, Ramban, and Ibn Ezra. After all, the concept of sacrificing living things is quite difficult to understand, especially in the context of a Torah that is so demanding regarding the treatment of animals that it prohibits humans to eat a meal before their animals have been fed!

Yet the laws of sacrifice are not limited to simple sinners. The law applies to the rich and poor, the weak and the mighty, and even to the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) himself.

(continued on the other side)

The Torah tells us that when the Kohen Gadol sins, he too must bring an offering. Although the Torah is detailing the ramifications of the Kohen Gadol's individual transgression, it mentions the sin of the nation too: "If the anointed Kohen Gadol will sin, bringing guilt upon the people" (Leviticus 4:3).

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Sforno, three of the most famous Torah commentators, all comment on the strange juxtaposition of the nation and the Kohen Gadol. "After all," they ask, "what connection do the people have to the Kohen Gadol's sin?" Why is his sin considered "bringing guilt upon the people"?


Dr. George Fordyce Story, was a prominent English physician in the latter part of the 18th Century. Despite his medical skills, he unfortunately possessed a major flaw – he was a heavy drinker. During a dinner at which he was quite inebriated, Dr. Fordyce was urgently summoned to tend to a distinguished person who had taken ill with unspecified symptoms.

Far from sober, Dr. Story had great difficulty locating the patient's pulse or even counting the beats. Frustrated and realizing his own condition, he muttered to himself, "Drunk, by golly!" and then proceeded to write a prescription.

The next morning Dr. Story received an official looking letter from his patient. He expected it to contain a stern rebuke for his inadequate doctoring the preceding night. It did not. Inside was a short note: "I, too, am aware of the sorry state I was found in yesterday evening – I am sure that you will keep your evaluation confidential." Enclosed was a 100 pound sterling note.

Perhaps the Torah is teaching the Kohen and us a lesson in human nature. When the people see the Kohen bringing a korban, they may feel that they too have sinned. A sense of guilt will fall upon the entire nation. And when he says the words of repentance, albeit quietly unto himself, the feeling of the people will be that they too are at fault. It is important for good leaders to know that their deeds affect the standard of their community. When they rise, so does their flock. Moreover, when, Heaven forbid, they fall, the nation falls with them. It is their duty to understand that they do not operate in a vacuum. Whatever they do, or whatever they say, trickles down to the people.

(by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

<p>Sale of Chometz forms are available online at www.chabadshul.org. Deadline for giving these filled-in forms to Rabbi Kaplan is Monday, April 3, 2023.</p>	
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SHUL DIRECTORY	
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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE	
<p>Friday, 3/24 — 2 Nissan Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 3/25 — 3 Nissan Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:05 a.m. Minchah — 6:50 p.m. Shiur — after Minchah Ma'ariv — 8:05 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 3/26 — 4 Nissan Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.</p> <p>Monday, 3/27 — 5 Nissan Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, 3/28 — 6 Nissan Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, 3/29 — 7 Nissan Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 3/30 — 8 Nissan Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 3/31 — 9 Nissan Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Shabbat Candles — 7:11 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.</p>