

### The Spiritual Aspect of Disease

Rituals of purification take up a good part of Parashat Metsora. These rituals are separate from and in addition to the basic laws for determining purity or impurity via observation and/or evaluation. The simplest form of this applied to “leprous” clothing at the end of last week’s Parasha: After washing out a problematic “leprous” spot so it is not problematic (and if that is not sufficient the spot may be torn out), the garment is simply given an additional washing afterwards for the sake of ritual purification.

For “leprous” persons, however, as well as for the “leprous” habitations inside which people dwell, there is a much more elaborate purification ritual. Indeed, the initial evaluation of “leprosy,” the procedures to be followed in isolating the leper, subsequent re-evaluations and even how to judge whether the “leprosy” has been healed were mostly covered in last week’s reading. The detailed description in our Parasha is largely given over to the “purification ritual” alone. In this “ritual” pre-occupation Leviticus betrays its general emphasis upon sacrificial types of ritual. But are there perhaps other reasons we can give as to why this additional step of a “purification” ritual is called for?

Of course, making the person wait for a purification ritual, including a second bathing, does serve as an additional precaution, and in matters of disease or the spread of contagion from person to person or in inside spaces, fixed-term waiting periods are in order as a precaution against recurrence. But more importantly, it would seem, the need for a “ritual,” particularly a sacrificial ritual, has to do with acknowledging “spiritual” dimensions of human illness. There are a number of these “spiritual” dimensions, which include feelings of sin and guilt, as well as relief and gratitude, feelings of spiritual pollution as well as repentance and being cleansed. I must say that the connection between the “spiritual” aspects of disease and the physical aspects are “fuzzy” and must remain so. I’d suggest that the “fuzziness” of the connection has something to do with the “disconnect” between Parashat Tazria and Parashat Metsora. In Parashat Tazria there seems no hint that any sacrifices are necessary. The priest simply inspects, and if the wound is healed the priest declares the patient to be pure. Parashat Metzora seems to be a kind of recap of Tazria’s laws from a “sacrificial” point of view, a view which connects to the more spiritual aspect of disease, which must be addressed from a somewhat independent and disconnected “fuzzy” angle. This “spiritual” aspect of human disease affects the human collective as well as the individual. Perhaps a recovered leper could be considered medically well, yet society might be loath to fully re-admit him. But the additional term of waiting, bathing, and sacrifice might then serve to assuage fear and reassure both the individual and the public - serving, so-to-speak, as his “vaccination card” for readmission to general society.

It is interesting that “leprosy” affects the human home and habitation, and that this type of “leprosy” seems more connected with “spiritual” purification as well as quarantine. In summation: One cannot demonstratively “prove” connections between spirit and human disease. Nevertheless, human disease does have spiritual dimensions, which must be addressed separately from the physical ones.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL  
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

### Shabbat Metsora-HaGadol

April 19-20, 2024 | 12 Nisan, 5784

#### SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Kaplan: p. 568 | Haftarah: p. 1288 // Hertz: p. 470 | Haftarah: p. 1005

#### Consecration Anniversary | Second Mill Street Synagogue (1818)

**Candle Lighting** | 7:22 pm

**Evening Services** | 6:45 pm

**Zemirot** | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

**Shahrit** | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

**Shabbat HaGadol Derasha** | At Morning Services | Rabbi Soloveichik

“From Door to Door: Ancient Egypt, Modern Israel,  
and the Secret of Jewish Endurance”

*Thank you to our sponsors:*

Linda & Michael Jesselson

Halana & Alan Greenberg, Solomon Family

Lewis Bateman, Anonymous

**Tot Shabbat** | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

**Youth Groups** | 10:00 am | Elias Room

**Jr. Congregation** | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

**Shabbat HaGadol Kiddush** | following services | *Wine sponsor: Faith Fogelman*

**Shabbat Afternoon Class will return next week.**

**Teen Shiur** | 6:35 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman | Elias Room

**Evening Services** | 7:20 pm

**Habdala** | 8:20 pm

#### Sunday Service Times

Morning: 8:05 am | Evening (Minha & Arbit): 6:30 pm

*Pesah begins Monday night.*

*See inside for the full schedule for the First Days of Pesah.*

## ANNOUNCING:

### ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISER VIRTUAL LECTURE SERIES

## "A History of Judaism in Five Foods"

*A Virtual Lecture Series by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik*

May 8-June 4

Sign up and sponsor at [shearithisrael.org/spring-fundraiser2024](https://shearithisrael.org/spring-fundraiser2024)



Livestreamed on Zoom at 7:30 pm

**Wednesday, May 8**

Holy Hallah to Holey Bagels: The Striking, Shocking, Amusing, and Inspiring 4,000 Year Story of Jewish Bread

**Tuesday, May 14**

Hamin, Cholent, Adafina: The Stirring Story of Sabbath Stew

**Tuesday, May 21**

Boureka, Latkeh, Knish: How the Humble Potato Changed Jewish Life Forever

**Tuesday, May 28**

Arbes to Hummus: A Little Legume, Jewish History, and the Future of Israeli Cuisine

**Tuesday, June 4**

A Talmudic Fisherman, Chagall's Herring, and Rabbinic Sushi: The Jewish Affection for Fish from Egypt to Today

*All sponsors and underwriters will be recognized in a beautiful content-rich commemorative booklet.*

**\*For Series Underwriters Only:** You will be invited to attend live culinary "edutainment" experiences with Rabbi Soloveichik. And don't worry about missing a livestream; a recording of the series will be made available to you at the conclusion. Stay tuned for more details!

## PESAH SCHEDULE

### Passover Preparations

**Search for Leaven – Sunday Evening, April 21**

At night on Sunday | after sunset, 7:42 pm

**Fast of First Born – Monday, April 22**

Fast begins (Dawn) | 4:44 am

Shahrit & *siyyum* for the First Born | 7:05 am

Stop eating *hametz* by | 10:39 am

Dispose of any remaining *hametz* by | 11:47 am

### First Two Days Of Yom Tob Pesah

**First Day of Passover – Monday Eve, April 22**

Candles (18 min. before sunset) | 7:25 pm

Evening Services (Minha & Arbit) | 7:15 pm

Begin the First Haggadah | after 8:08 pm

**Pesah I – Tuesday, April 23**

Zemiroth | 8:15 am

Shahrit | 9:00 am

Tikkun HaTal inserted in Musaf | 10:30 am

Shir HaShirim Reading | 7:00 pm

Evening Services (Minha & Arbit) | 7:15 pm

Day 1 Ends & Omer Counting | after 8:09 pm

Candles & Second Haggadah | after 8:09 pm

**Pesah II – Wednesday, April 24**

Zemiroth | 8:15 am

Shahrit, Hallel, Sermon, Musaf | 9:00

Shir HaShirim Reading | 7:15 pm

Minha & Arbit | 7:30 pm

Habdala/Omer | 8:11 pm

To sponsor a Pesah kiddush, go to [shearithisrael.org/pesah5784](https://shearithisrael.org/pesah5784)

### Hol Hamoed Pesah

**Intermediate Weekdays of Passover (Thurs, Fri, & Sun, April 25, 26, & 28)**

#### Mornings

Thursday & Friday: Shahrit/Musaf | 7:05 am || Sunday: Shahrit/Musaf | 8:05 am

#### Thursday Evening

Minha & Arbit | 6:30 pm

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to **Neta Wiznia**, upon placing 3rd in the NYS History Day Contest for her documentary: "Flash Freeze: The Moment the Pod Went Pop."

Condolences to **Charlotte Triefus** (Zuckerberg), upon the passing of her mother, Diana Triefus.