

Tzara'at and Spiritual Cleanliness



**CHANA
SHELDON**

Rosh Tribe Camp 2023

In this week's parasha, we delve into the laws of *tzara'at*, a skin disease often mistranslated as leprosy. This portion is particularly relevant as this week is "Shabbat Hagadol", the special Shabbat that precedes Pesach.

What exactly is *tzara'at*? *Tzara'at* is not just a physical ailment, but it is also a spiritual affliction. In ancient times, if someone showed signs of *tzara'at*, like unusual spots on their skin, clothes or it even appeared on the walls of their house, they had to be separated

from others. This separation allowed them to undergo a special spiritual cleansing process before they could rejoin their community. *Tzara'at* reminds us to pay attention to both our physical and spiritual health, and it teaches us about the importance of spiritual cleanliness and renewal.

But why focus on this during the lead-up to Pesach? Well, Pesach is a time of renewal and freedom. Just as those afflicted with *tzara'at* had to undergo a process of purification to be allowed back into the community, Pesach represents our own journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom, where we cleanse ourselves of the spiritual 'impurities' that hold us back.

Shabbat Hagadol, the "Great Shabbat," occurs on the Shabbat

before Pesach. It commemorates the miraculous events leading to the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt, in particular, when the Israelites took lambs, which the Egyptians saw as a symbol of their god and tied them to their bedposts for four days without resistance. This act symbolises the defiance of the Israelites against their Egyptian oppressors and marks the beginning of their liberation from slavery in Egypt, as they embarked on their journey toward freedom.

As we approach Pesach, we should internalise the message of *tzara'at* and the Exodus, striving to cleanse ourselves of whatever enslaves us and embracing the freedom to live authentically and purposefully.

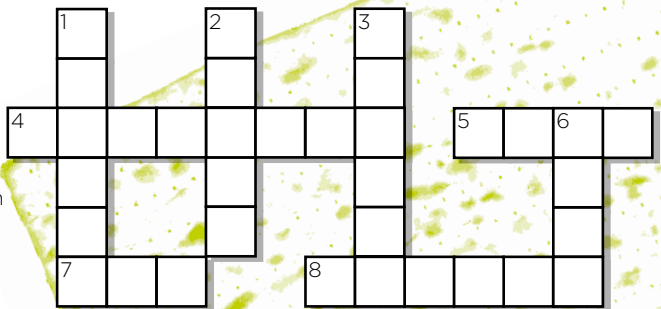
Pre-Pesach Puzzler

Across

4. A celebration of the escape of the Jews from Egypt
5. A young sheep
7. To take in food though the mouth
8. A flaw or blemish that keeps something from being perfect

Down

1. A serious disease or disaster
2. The red liquid that is sent through the body by the heart
3. To hit someone or something
6. The flesh of animals that is used as food



Answers
Down: 1.Plague 2.Blood 3.Strike 6.Meat
Across: 4.Passover 5.Lamb 7.Eat 8.Defect