

The Jewish Weekly

In Loving memory of
Mendy Klein
 ר' מנחם משה ז"ל
 בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא
 נפטר ל"ג בעומר
 י"ח אייר תשע"ח
 ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Scroll To The End Of Exile

By Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Telsner

While I was enrolled as a student in Chabad's Yeshiva in Crown Heights, a remarkable event took place, which involved a no less remarkable object — the Moshiach's Sefer Torah that the Previous Rebbe had commissioned, but that was never finished.

At the height of the Holocaust — on Simchas Torah of 1941 — the Previous Rebbe had announced that he planned to write a Torah scroll with which to greet Moshiach. It was the darkest time for the Jewish people and the Previous Rebbe sought to bring some measure of reassurance to all those deeply troubled by what was happening in the world. These were "the birth pangs of Moshiach" he said, "and we will write a Torah scroll with which to welcome his arrival."

Although great pains were taken to obtain the highest quality parchment and the best scribe, and although the project was begun with great fanfare, for reasons unknown, the Torah scroll was never completely finished. The project was suspended and the scroll was placed in an old wooden ark — an Aron Kodesh — where it rested for many years. The Torah stood there ninety-nine percent complete.

Sometime in 1968, the Previous Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson, noticed that the old wooden ark — which stood in the office of Rabbi Shmuel Levitin in "770" — had deteriorated over time, and he ordered a new one. And then he requested that the Rebbe move the Sefer Torah to the new ark. The Rebbe responded that he would do so that afternoon before the onset of Shabbat.

Now it was my custom to pray Mincha, the afternoon prayers, in the Rebbe's synagogue before Shabbat. I was always there when the Rebbe prayed together with a small group, and it was always a very beautiful prayer service — a quiet intimate Mincha, very extraordinary.

That day, the word got around that the Rebbe was going to move the Torah scroll from the old Aron Kodesh to the new one, and people were standing around to see if they could catch a glimpse of this event. One could go around the building and see into the room through a window, but out of respect for the Rebbe, I would not even contemplate such a thing. Instead, I waited, along with some others, all of us hoping to catch a glimpse through the doorway.

As we stood there, we heard a clack and we saw the Rebbe coming. As he came down the hallway, he passed a small closet and noticed that some coats had fallen on the floor, so he bent down to pick them up. When the Rebbe started rehanging the coats, everybody rushed over to help. Then he went into the room, leaving the door open, and we saw him move the Torah scroll.

After that, the whole subject was forgotten until two years later, when the Rebbe decided

to finish the writing of this Torah scroll.

The decision came about, as plans were being laid to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Previous Rebbe's passing and to mark 20 years of the Rebbe's leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch. Ideas for how to do this came from all over the world, but it was a woman in Kfar Chabad, Israel, who suggested that the Moshiach's Sefer Torah be finally finished.

Once the Rebbe launched this project, a worthy scribe had to be hired. One of the original scribes — Rabbi Shmaryahu Faktor — was again selected. Only a few lines remained to be finished and the Rebbe invited anyone who wanted the merit of participating in this sacred project to take part by donating one dollar toward the completion. Although the early participants in the project, in the days of the Previous Rebbe, were able to subsidize the writing of specific letters, now there were too many donors and too few letters, so this was not possible but, the Rebbe said, "the angels would divide the letters among all [the contributors]."

The day finally came for the Torah scroll to be finished. It happened on the afternoon of Friday, the 9th of Shevat, 5730 (January, 1970) — and I was there. The rabbis sat on the first set of benches behind the Rebbe and I was right behind them. It was as solemn an event as "770" had every seen. You could cut the seriousness and anticipation with a knife.

I vividly recall Rabbi Simpson coming down the stairs with the Torah scroll in his arms, and the Rebbe coming down behind him carrying a big box. Nobody had any idea what was in that box and, of course, we couldn't help but wonder.

The Rebbe put the box down on the table, and then the completion of the last few letters began. Finally, the quill was passed to the Rebbe for the final stroke, but he made the scribe his agent, so to speak, and Rabbi Faktor finished the writing of the scroll.

Then the ceremony began with the recitation of psalms and the singing of several songs selected by the Rebbe. And that is when, to the astonishment of the crowd, the Rebbe opened the box he had brought to reveal a magnificent silver and gold crown which he placed atop the scroll.

Later, I learned that the week before the event, the Rebbe called in the silversmith who was supposed to make this crown. The man had half-a-dozen samples to show the Rebbe who looked them over and said, "I want the bottom like this one, the middle like this one, and the top of that one."

The man asked, "How fast does the Rebbe need it?"

"Next week."

The guy looked at the Rebbe and said, "But it takes three or four weeks to do."

"But I need it next week," the Rebbe said.

It Once Happened..

The man met the deadline and produced a beautiful crown.

Walking under a canopy amid burning candles, the Rebbe carried the Torah scroll to the front of the synagogue and placed it in the Aron Kodesh. After that, he came back to his place and began a Chassidic discourse on the subject of writing a Torah scroll.

When he was done, he concluded: "We have just completed something that had been lacking. Now it is only up to each of us to finish the last few things that need to be done in order to break through the exile and bring Moshiach."

May this happen quickly, in our days.

Reprinted from my encounter with the Rebbe, www.myencounterblog.com.

Editor's Note: The Coronavirus pandemic has shaken the world and brought humanity to its knees. It is not an exaggeration to say we are at war. It seems as if the forces opposed to holiness in the world have torn our lives apart, and torn us from each other. Our shuls, schools, and yeshivos have been shuttered. Celebrations that were once the lifeblood of the Jewish community--weddings, Bar and Bas Mitzvos, communal gatherings--have been reduced to online interactions that are a pale imitation of the warmth of human touch. Funerals are being conducted with a minyan, and the mourners mourn alone. This is not the way G-d meant for life to be lived.

In the times of the Baal Shem Tov a terrible disease swept through his town of Mezibush. Men, women and children were falling ill to the epidemic.

Out of desperation, the community leaders turned to the Baal Shem Tov and asked him to daven that the plague be banished from their midst.

The Baal Shem Tov responded that the annulment of the decree was in their hands. Only by uniting together in the creation of a new Torah scroll, he explained, would the town be spared. Those who still had their health sprang into action and began raising the funds to commission a new Torah. The Baal Shemtov instructed his personal Sofer (ritual scribe) to begin writing this Torah. Miraculously, as the Torah was written, the community began to heal. This scroll became known as the "Miracle Sefer Torah."

We find ourselves in identical times. The virus that has halted the world has inflicted disproportionate pain on the Jewish community. To combat the epidemic, we are taking inspiration from the Baal Shem Tov's direction, and a worldwide Sefer Torah is currently being written. You have the opportunity to take part. Rabbanim Roshie Yeshivos, and Gedolim have encouraged everyone to join in this initiative.

The funds will go directly to cover the costs of the Sefer Torah. Any extra funds will be donated to Hatzala who work tirelessly and selflessly on behalf of our communities, every single day.

The Jewish community is reeling and many of our family members and neighbors are in need of a Refua Shelaima from COVID - 19.

The situation is dire. We must spring to action. Buy your letter now!

Let us join together to storm the heavens and eradicate this virus from our midst by going to www.unitedforprotection.com/.



YF GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Tazria - Metzora

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:39	7:54	8:32
Tel Aviv	6:54	7:56	
Haifa	6:46	7:57	
Be'er Sheva	6:56	7:55	

The Corona Funeral for the Wrong Man

By Chaya Maimon



Moshe Grunwald, z'l

Moshe Grunwald lived a full and long life. A scion of Hungary's rabbinic and chassidic aristocracy, he survived Auschwitz and the Nazi death marches, rebuilding his family and his life in America.

A longtime resident of Brooklyn, N.Y., he passed away recently, amongst the dozens were felled by the coronavirus. The family was told that the funeral would be at 10 a.m. sharp. Only a small group was allowed to attend, and the entire proceedings would be brief, consisting of a few Psalms and the Keil Maleh Rachamim.

Following tradition, but standing apart from each other, the mourners approached the casket and asked their beloved patriarch to forgive them for anything they may have done to slight him. After Psalms were said and the truncated service was about to end, a flustered undertaker approached the casket and took a good look.

"I'm sorry," he told the shocked family. "We took out the wrong casket. Please wait while I return this casket and bring out Mr. Grunwald."

The family exited the funeral home in shock and waited in their cars until it was time to begin the funeral ... again!

"I have to admit I was so upset that this had happened to my Zaidy," wrote his granddaughter, Chaya Maimon, on Facebook. "The man who was loved by all. Who deserved so much kavod, who had to die alone due to a pandemic, who had to have this embarrassment of a funeral, who couldn't have a fitting burial or shiva. This was the final insult. I was so upset, I started to laugh and cry simultaneously. I couldn't believe I was living in a time where there are so many bodies that they mixed them up."

Then she learned the rest of the story.

The person whom the Grunwald clan had accidentally mourned, was a meit mitzvah (a person who leaves no family to care for his or her funeral, whose burial is then a communal obligation).

He had died alone in his apartment and was only found four days later. He was to be buried with no fanfare with no one to mourn the end of his life.

Through a Divinely orchestrated twist of fate, he ended up with a beautiful funeral and a minyan—something under normal circumstances he would not have had.

"And then I remember my Zaidy," wrote Maimon. "My Zaidy was always honored, but he ran and hid from it; he never wanted the spotlight. He always thought there was someone greater than him who deserved the honor."

"Well, Zaidy, as usual, got the last laugh. We couldn't chase him to the front of the funeral home. Even in death, he gave his kavod for someone else."

"A meit mitzvah got a funeral. I can just imagine the laugh in Zaidy's eyes as he watched this. His chesed [kindness] and hachnasat orchim [hospitality] knew no bounds. I know in my heart my Zaidy did in death what he always did in life."

My grandfather was the nephew of the Alter (older sage) Tzeilemer Rebbe (head of a chassidic dynasty) he was well known in the community. He bears the same last name as the Alter Tzeilemer Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Grunwald. My great grandfather Amrom Grunwald is buried steps away from the Tzeilemer Rebbe.

Due to the coronavirus, outbreak, every single regular member of the Chevra Kadisha (people who ritually prepare bodies for a Jewish funeral) was out sick. Not one single older member who would recognize my grandfather was there. The Taharat (ritual purification) were being done by young men not as familiar with the Kehilla (community) as the older members.

The meit mitzvah should not have been mixed up, he had been dead for a few days and was not in good shape, while my grandfather had been gone less than 24 hours and therefore was in a very different condition.

The mistake was made so thoroughly, that the meit mitzvah actually received my grandfather's Mehudar (extra special) Tzeilemer Tahara. Then he was brought up to our waiting family for the funeral.

We found out that, had the Chesed Shel Emet volunteers (organization that ritually prepares unknown bodies or people with no family) come a few minutes later, the mistake would not have been caught.

It is our families belief that this meit mitzvah was a special person, clearly deserving of this special honor. We would like to know more about him and are actively seeking information. Please get in touch if you know anything.

May Hashem bless us all and end this terrible mageifa (pandemic) that is affecting so many of us. May we soon return to our houses of worship, our schools, and our regular daily life with renewed faith, and vigor. May this soon be a distant memory.

May the memory of Moshe ben Amram and Chaya, be a blessing.

Reprinted from an email of Chabad.org and Chaya Maimon's facebook page.



The second Parsha of this double Parsha, Parshat Metzora introduces us to the fascinating subject of צרעת הבית, 'Leprosy of the House'. The Bnei Yisrael were informed that upon entry into the Land of Canaan, there could be a possibility that their houses could become leprous. If there was discoloration of the walls, that could spell the ultimate scenario in which a house would have to be raised to the ground.

As can be expected, the Midrash Tanchuma explains that this would come as a punishment for a serious sin that the householder would have committed. The Gemara in Masechet Erchin identifies that sin as dishonesty.

The Midrash Rabbah tells us that actually this would come as a punishment for somebody who was wealthy and yet acted in a miserly way, always claiming that he had nothing to give to charity. As part of the process of צרעת הבית, he would need to take all of his possessions outside his front door, and therefore everybody would see how wealthy he actually was.

Fascinatingly, the Midrash in Vayikra Rabbah tells us that צרעת הבית comes as a reward. Now how can this be possible? You lose your home and it's a reward? Explains the Midrash. When the Canaanites were fleeing from the Holy Land, they hoped that one day they would return to their homes. And so they hid their most valuable possessions inside the walls of those homes. And so Hashem identified those homes by placing the discoloration on the walls.

Consequently, once the homes were raised to the ground, the owners were able to find that hidden treasure.

"Sometimes the greatest of treasures in life come through difficulty and travail."

I believe that there is a powerful message here for all of life. Sometimes things go wrong, and we cry out to Hashem and we say: "Why have you cursed us in this fashion?" Little do we realize that actually we are taking a few steps backwards in order to move hundreds of steps forwards. Sometimes the greatest of treasures in life come through difficulty and travail. This is how the Gemara in Masechet Brachot puts it, כל מאן דעביד רהמנא לטב עביד, Whatever God does, He does for the good.

So let's try to see everything for the good and let's pray with all our hearts for all those who are sick from the epidemic as well as praying for our soldiers who go out to protect us and those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet and happy Shabbat and Chodesh Tov.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

Parshat Tazria	Parshat Metzora
NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 7	NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 11
MITZVOT ASEH: 5	MITZVOT ASEH: 11
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 2	MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 0
NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 67	NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 90
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1010	NUMBER OF WORDS: 1274
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 3667	NUMBER OF LETTERS: 4697

This year, (5780 / 2020) Shabbat Parshat Tazria-Metzora is the Second day Rosh Chodesh Iyar. The Mafkir is read from the second Torah from Parshat Pinchas – (Bamidbar 28:9-15) the two paragraphs "Uvayom Hashabbat" and "Uvrashai Chadshaihem."

HAFTORA:
AFTER PARSHAT METZORA
The special Haftorah for Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh - Yeshayahu 66:1-24 repeating verse 23 at the end.

This Shabbat we study Chapter 2 of "Pirkei Avot."

תזריע - מצורע

This week is dedicated in memory of all the fallen soldiers and civilians who perished in terror attacks while protecting us

The Jewish Weekly staff salute you