



## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

## True Buried Treasure

The *Seforno* 14:12 explains that when one speaks *lashon hara*, it is as if he's trying to hide his plans from Hakadosh Baruch Hu, for *lashon hara* is generally spoken in private. This indicates that a person does not believe G-d is there listening, too. But let's imagine how powerful the lesson was when a person then became a *metzora* and received a crystal clear, direct communication from G-d: "I know what you said—I was there, you're in trouble, now do *teshuva*." As embarrassing

as it was to be a *metzora*, imagine how liberating! Further imagine how unlikely one was to become a repeat offender. How greatly do we suffer without the punishment of *tzaraas*!

HaGaon R' Moshe Feinstein unravels a seeming inconsistency. "When you come to the land of Canaan. . . And I will give you *tzaraas* in your home" (14:34). Rashi explains that *tzaraas* would appear on the home so the walls would have to be knocked down in order to discover the treasures hidden there by the Amorites. But how do we reconcile *tzaraas*, a seeming punishment, with finding treasure—seemingly a reward? Explains R' Moshe that if a person were completely free of sin, he would merit the treasure without needing the anguish of *tzaraas* and needing to break down his walls. The duality of his experience indicates he both has merit and is deserving of punishment.

Thus, he also has a clear message from G-d: "Here is your reward, but you must repent!" Perhaps we can extrapolate this lesson to similar situations in our lives. Whenever we must endure any sort of pain or discomfort to receive Hashem's bounty, we can pause to contemplate this powerful message. 📖

RABBI  
EZRA  
STETTIN

## A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

From this week's *parasha*, name connections to *nazir* in word and in deed.

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer! 📖

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

One day during *Chol Hamoed* (the intermediate days of) Pesach, a food production factory accidentally added a *chometz* ingredient into the kosher for Pesach food. All the food became *chometz*, and the rabbi ruled that it should all be burnt. The factory owner asked that, since this would incur a big loss, can he tell the insurance company what happened and file a claim, or perhaps, if he files and does receive the payout would that be tantamount to deriving benefit from *chometz* on Pesach (which is forbidden)?

**Q** May he file the claim?

**A** I presented this question to my father-in-law Rav Elyashiv, and he answered that it would be permitted to do so. He draws proof from the Talmud (*Avoda Zara* 59b) which states that a Jew whose wine was purposefully touched by a gentile rendering it *yayin nesech*, wine forbidden to consume or derive benefit from, although he may not sell it to anyone else, he may take money from the gentile that touched it. The reasoning for this is that he's not selling or benefitting from the *yayin nesech*; he's just getting reimbursed for kosher wine the gentile ruined.

Here too, the factory owner isn't benefitting from the *chometz*. The money he may receive from insurance is for the non-*chometz* food that got ruined, not for the *chometz*.

**Q** May the *chometz* be retained until an appraiser from the insurance company comes to investigate, or perhaps, by not destroying it immediately, does

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## A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

he transgress the commandment of *bal yerah ubal yimatze*, not seeing and not possessing *chometz* on Pesach?

**A** Rashi and Tosafos (*Pesachim* 29b) argue as to whether one transgresses this commandment if he *does* plan on destroying *chometz* that he found, but intentionally leaves it for a later time. Since the final ruling is not clear, we should act stringently in accordance with the rule that any doubt we have on a Biblical commandment, we rule stringently. Accordingly, the factory owner should be stringent and destroy the *chometz* immediately.

However, in an instance where a drawn out process is inevitable because many tons of *chometz* must be burned, or the like, the owner should press the appraiser to come during that time to estimate the damage. 📖

## GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL AEPI TRIP TO ISRAEL

Kollet college outreach director (and AEPI "brother") Aryeh Pridonoff led a group of 11 AEPI students from UC on a 10 day educational trip to Israel last Spring. Several students are already slated to be doing similar trips and yeshiva programs this summer.



## IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

LEAH AKS AND HER INFANT SON, FRANK, WERE traveling to America to reunite with her husband Sam. The boat on which she bought a steerage ticket on was *Titanic*. When the *Titanic* began sinking, Leah made it on to lifeboat with her son. However, immediately after she boarded her lifeboat, another man tried to squeeze himself aboard. The man was pulled off by the ship's crew because women and children were being given priority for space on the lifeboats since there was not enough space for all 2,200 people on board. The man began

to fight to get back on the lifeboat and while being thrown off again, in his maniacal state, he grabbed little Frank out of Leah's arms and threw him with all his might. Leah was beside herself with grief. Leah was eventually picked up together with all 700 people who had gotten into the lifeboats by the steamer the *Carpathia*. Two days later, while walking on the deck of the *Carpathia*, Leah saw a nun holding her baby! She immediately tried to retrieve her son but the nun refused. "While I was on the lifeboat this child came flying into my lap.

It's a sign that G-d wanted me to care for this child," said the nun. Leah began to create a stir that attracted the attention of others on board and the captain, Arthur Rostron, was called to settle the matter. Leah told Rostron, "I can prove the baby is mine. I am Jewish. We circumcise our children and I circumcised my son too. You can check for yourself!" When Rostron checked and found that Leah was correct, Frank, who Leah had given up on ever seeing again, was now returned to her. 📖

## BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On April 14th, 1912, at approximately 11:35 p.m., the RMS *Titanic* hit an iceberg that caused it to sink within two hours. Over 1,500 people lost their lives. Among the *Titanic* casualties were approximately 100 Jews on their way to America. In the Russian town of Novoprana, a woman named Tzivia Meizner approached the town *rav*, Rabbi Yaakov Meskin (who would later serve as rabbi in Burlington, Vermont, and the Bronx) and explained that her husband, Shimon, was supposed to have sailed on the *Titanic* and had not been heard from. Was she now permitted to remarry? The difficulty was that there were no eyewitnesses to the death, which is the classic Torah method of establishing the death of one's husband. Rabbi Meskin's response presented evidence that would assume the death of Shimon Meizner and weighed it against *halachic* standards for permitting remarriage. One of his arguments questioned whether the ship's manifest could prove that he was actually on board since it is possible someone else shared his name. He also examined whether the fact that she had not heard from him could strengthen the case, especially since he left on good terms with his wife. Rabbi Meskin concluded that she should be permitted to remarry, but he sent his *halachic* analysis for approval from his *rebbe*, Rabbi Yitzchok Yaakov Rabinowitz, better known as Reb Itzile Ponovezher. Rabbi Rabinowitz brought other reasons to permit her to remarry, but concluded that a *beis din* (court of Jewish law) should be convened to decide the matter, due to the stringency of this issue and the possibility of lasting consequences. 📖

SOURCES: Hoffman, Dovid. "The Unsinkable Titanic." Retrieved from [www.yated.com](http://www.yated.com). Meskin, Rabbi Yaakov. "Sefer Bais Yaakov." Siman 49.

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