



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel

From our archives

Parshas Tazria deals primarily with the laws of tzaraas, a leprosy-like malady affecting a person's skin, which may appear on one's clothing or house as well.

The manifestation of tzaraas is not a disease of the body but, rather, an ailment of the soul. This is clear from the directives and purification process that the Torah prescribes for the afflicted person. Indeed, the Talmud (Arachin 16a) identifies seven anti-social behaviors, prominent among them slander, as the cause of the "illness." The stricken person is isolated and expelled from the camp, not for purposes of quarantine, but rather to induce contemplation and reflection regarding his selfish behavior. The Torah's message is that, to be part of and benefit from society, he must cease to sow strife and discord. He is enjoined instead to promote peace and harmony, and to play a positive and constructive role in his interactions with society.

Why, then, may even an infant contract this spiritual malady and be subjected to its rehabilitation process (Nidda 44a)? Surely this moral warning – the entire purpose of the affliction — should only take effect at the age of maturity and understanding!

To answer this question, I cite the majestic and soaring words of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch on this very question: "However, children who have not yet reached maturity are part of their parents' personality. They are the tender shoots of humanity, and they grow up to be a likeness of G-d, nurtured by the home life and following the example of their parents. Just as a *nega* (affliction) on a garment or on a house is a sign of warning to its owner, so is a *nega* on the forehead of an innocent child a shocking warning to his parents to examine their deeds and consider what picture of life they are presenting — through their social behavior — as an example to their child. The *nega*-mark on their child's body and the declaration of *tum'ah* (impurity) with its consequences constitute a solemn warning to the parents: For your child's sake, improve your deeds; for the sake of your children's future, be decent and good! You are accountable for the moral stain that will cling to your children. Indeed, a *nega* on the brow of their innocent child is a graver warning to the parents than a *nega* that strikes their own bodies."*

As we come together to enjoy our delicious Shabbos meal and delight in the company of our family, let us be cognizant of the powerful and everlasting effect of our conduct and speech on our children. When we are careful to act in the refined and gracious manner we expect of ourselves, our children will surely grow up to be the people we hope and pray for them to be.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

*Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, The Hirsch Chumash: Sefer Vayikra – Part I, trans. Daniel Haberman (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 2008), 429.

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

"For the person being purified there shall be taken two live, clean birds..." (14:4)

Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi said, "Why does the metzora bring two birds? Since he spoke constantly, as a bird that is constantly chirping..." (Eiruchin 16b)

The metzora's sin was gossip, not endless talking. If one only speaks permissible matters there is no prohibition to be constantly speaking. So why does the metzora bring a bird to hint at constant chirping?

Parsha Riddle

Where in this parsha does $7+7=13$?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How can one miss counting the day of the Omer and still be able to count with a bracha the next night?

Answer: If one only counted the weeks and days of that week, even if he did not count the total amount of days, he may count the next day with a bracha. (Mishna Berura 489:38)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parshas Metzora, the Torah instructs that when a homeowner reports a possible tzara'as affliction upon his house, "The Kohen shall command; and they shall clear the house before the Kohen comes to look at the affliction, so that everything in the house should not become contaminated; and afterward shall the Kohen come to look at the house."

This translation (by ArtScroll) of the Biblical text indicates that the purpose of clearing out the house is to prevent its contents from becoming ritually impure (*tamei*). The Mishnah (*Negaim* 12:5) actually records a dispute over whether all the contents of the house are to be removed, or only those things that are capable of becoming *tamei*, and it proceeds with a lesson we learn from the verse (according to the latter interpretation):

R. Meir said: ... **About what** items was the Torah concerned? ... It was concerned **about his earthenware utensils** ... Items made of earthenware cannot be made *tahor* by immersing them in a *mikveh*, but must instead be broken. The Torah therefore urged the owner to remove them before his house is declared *tamei*, in order to save them from having to be broken.

Now **if the Torah was so concerned for his insignificant property**, such as his earthenware utensils, which are worth very little, to save them from going to waste, we may infer that **certainly** it is concerned **for his precious possessions**. ...

The principle that "The Torah spared the money of the Jewish people" appears in a number of places in the Talmud as an explanation for the use of a less expensive material or substance (such as wood instead of silver or gold, silver instead of gold, or a lower grade of oil instead of a higher one) in a particular religious ceremony even though a more expensive one might seem more appropriate (*Rosh Hashanah* 27a; *Yoma* 39a and 44b; *Menachos* 76b and 86a-b), and the aforementioned understanding of the Torah's direction to clear out a house that may turn out to be afflicted with *tzara'as* is often cited as a source for this principle (Rashi *Rosh Hashanah* *ibid.* and *Yoma* 39a).

This principle is also sometimes invoked as an argument against excessive *halachic* stringency that entails expense; a more detailed discussion of this application of the principle is unfortunately beyond the scope of this article.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I don't say, I 'says.'
2. I am not a load.
3. I whiten your hair.
4. My center may be healthy.

#2 WHO AM I?

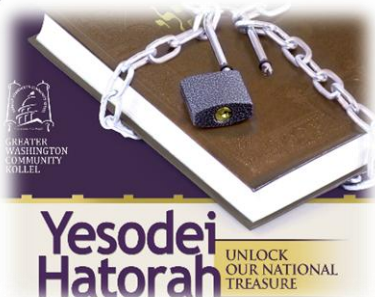
1. We are double.
2. We are kosher.
3. Our end is different.
4. One makes the other red.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Shemini/Eighth (I am for the covenant, I was for the consecration, I am for an extra Yomtov, I name this week's.)

#2 Scales (I don't measure weight, I am fishy business, I am a sign of purity, I am not for climbing a cliff.)

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