



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

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."¹

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.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

¹Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash: Sefer Vayikra – Part I*, trans. Daniel Haberman (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 2008), 429.

POINT TO PONDER

When a woman gives birth... (12:2)

Rav Simloai taught, just as man was created after the animals, so too the halachic rules for man are listed after the halachic rules of animals (as the rules of kashrus were listed in Parshas Shmini) (Rashi).

The rules of kashrus may be regarding animals, but they do not pertain to animals. Animals are not obligated to only eat other kosher animals. So what does it mean that the halachic rules for animals are listed before the rules for man? Both last parsha and this parsha are teaching us halachic rules that pertain to man!

PARSHA RIDDLE

When is a Kohen not allowed to tell the metzora that he has tzoraas?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

When are women permitted to drink from the havdola wine?

Answer: When Yom Tov is on Motzoei Shabbos, and we make Havdalla during Kiddush. Especially this year on Pesach, women who make their own kiddush made havdalla and drank the wine.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

Halacha Insights from the Parsha

In *Parshas Tazria*, the Torah decrees that one afflicted with *Tzara'as* (commonly translated as leprosy) "shall put a covering upon his upper lip" and "shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be" (Leviticus 13:45-46). Some commentators understand these instructions epidemiologically: leprosy is contagious, so the leper is quarantined and covers his face to prevent its transmission to others (*Va'Yikra Rabbah Metzora* 16:3; *Ramban* 12:15 and 14:7; R. Yosef Bechor Shor 13:46, *Minchah Belulah* 13:45-46).

Medieval *halachic* authorities consider the question of the appropriate reaction to plague epidemics; the consensus rejects the fatalistic attitude of passivity in the face of Divine Providence and encourages flight from infested areas (*Shut. Ha'Rashbash* 195; *Shut. Maharil*41:1).

There is debate over whether the commandment to visit the sick applies even to those afflicted with serious, contagious diseases; some insist that it generally does (*Shut. Ha'Rema*#20), while others consider this untenable, and record the prevailing custom that only specially designated attendants, who were well compensated for their services, would visit those afflicted by plague (*Shulchan Gavo'ah yoreh de'ah* 3:335:1).

It is reported that during a cholera epidemic in 1831, Rav Akiva Eger braved the danger of contagion and entered infested areas in order to provide aid and comfort to the afflicted, and that his heroism was officially recognized by the Prussian King Frederick William III. Rav Shmuel Ha'Levi Vosner infers from this that physicians that are able to aid the sick may not shirk their duty in spite of the risk of contagion, although they should, of course, take all possible precautions to avoid contagion (*Shut. Shevet Ha'Levi* 8:251:7); this is the opinion of other contemporary authorities as well (*Shut. Tzitz Eliezer* 9:17:5; *Nishmas Avraham yoreh de'ah* 335:8[22]).

Presented by Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman, Rosh Chaburah

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not for songs
2. I am mentioned at the Seder
3. I am for a boy
4. I am after a week

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for you
2. I am for your clothes
3. I am for your house
4. I could reveal treasures

Please see next week's issue for the answers

Last Issue's Answers:

#1 *Kos / Owl* (My cheeks look like yours, Don't confuse with a cup, I am around at night, I howl)

#2 *Nesher / Eagle* (I am for Moshiach's time, My kids go on my back, I am not kosher, I am the forerunner to the airplane)

Congratulations to

Tamar Stiber

and to all those who answered correctly this week!

Visit <http://www.gwckollel.org> to submit your answers. Answer as many as you can because each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

Win a
Stomp
Rocket
Ultra



Next Raffle
Drawing
June 2nd!

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

The Kollel, in conjunction with YISE, invites men and women of the community to a Jewish Ethics lecture. Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman will be speaking on the topic of "Civil Procedure in the Modern Beis Din System."

**Sunday, May 3rd, at 9:30 AM,
at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah, 1132 Arcola Avenue**

