



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Conceiving the Inconceivable

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male, she shall be ritually impure for seven days... and on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. (12:2-3)

The Parsha begins by teaching the laws of *tumah* (ritual impurity) associated with giving birth. When a woman gives birth to a male, she will be *tameh* for seven days followed by thirty-three days where she is not rendered impure (by Torah law) from any menstrual-like bleeding. When a woman gives birth to a female, she will be *tameh* for fourteen days, followed by sixty-six days where her bleeding will not render her impure. Since it is clear that this state of impurity only takes effect when she actually gives birth and not at the point of conception, why does the Torah need to state "when a woman conceives and gives birth?" It would have been sufficient to say, "when a woman gives birth." Furthermore, why does the Torah interrupt these laws with the law of circumcision?

Rav Yosef Salant (Be'er Yosef) explains, based on the Midrash, that the Torah mentions conception when discussing the laws relating to birth in order to highlight the tremendous kindness G-d performs for each person during the fetal development stage. Each and every one of us was conceived from a tiny drop that grew, developed, and formed through the miraculous period of gestation. By G-d's good grace, the fetus's every need was provided until it was ready to emerge pure and complete. Before the Torah instructs us in the laws pertaining to the protection of our ritual purity, *tumah* and *tahara*, it first reminds us how G-d protected us while we were in our mothers' wombs.

This lesson can also help us achieve a greater appreciation for the *mitzvah* of circumcision and explain its placement here. The Midrash recounts how the Roman, Tournosrufos, asked Rabbi Akiva the following: if it was true that G-d desires that male babies be circumcised, why didn't He create them that way? Rabbi Akiva responded that G-d wanted to provide us the opportunity to perfect ourselves. When one contemplates the process of development between conception and birth one can take to heart the message of Rabbi Akiva. G-d has performed such a miraculous act by developing all of the baby's organs and limbs; why *does* He leave one area imperfect? Surely, it is to teach us that it is our job to perfect ourselves.

Through contemplating the wonders of G-d's creations, and in particular the miracle of pregnancy and birth, we should be filled with awe and appreciation and reminded of our ongoing mission to constantly improve and perfect ourselves.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

SPONSOR

To sponsor a Shabbos Delights, please contact info@gwckollel.org

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

If there shall be tzoraas affliction on a garment, in a woolen garment or a linen garment.... (13, 47)

One may think that garments made from other materials, such as camel wool, can receive tzoraas. Therefore, the verse specifies only from sheep wool or linen. (Toras Kohanim)

If one mixes camel wool and sheep wool together and makes a garment, if the majority of the wool is from the camel, the garment will not be able to receive tzoraas. (Negoyim 11, 2)

The Ran (Nedarim 52a) rules that when two permissible items are mixed, the minority item does not lose its identity to the majority. If so, why would the minority sheep wool lose its identity to the majority camel wool and lose its ability to receive tzoraas? (Rav Akiva Eiger 189)

Parsha Riddle

Which page in the Vilna Shas has no gemara on it?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why would the mitzvah of reading Parshas Parah be a Torah obligation? Answer: We are commanded in the Torah to remember the sin of the golden calf. Since it would be disgraceful for Bnei Yisrael to read about the golden calf, the reading of the Para Adumah, which was an atonement for that sin is a reminder of it. (Yalkut Hagershuni Orach Chaim 685)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

From our archives

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. Maharil41:1).

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 Gavoa'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. My renewal and the Menorah were similar.
2. I fill up halfway.
3. I make you give "Shalom."
4. My complaining made me small.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I lock you up.
2. I make a treasure hunt.
3. Wash your clothes.
4. Visit the barber.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Parah Adumah/Red Heifer (I clean up, My translation is like "annul," I am similar to Esav, The egg's middle is not my prohibition.)

#2 Chazir/Pig (My appearance is kosher, I am not "return," My eating prohibits yours, I could also mean "fress.")

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

GREATER WASHINGTON COMMUNITY KOLLEL
Shabbos of Inspiration
at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah
Shabbos Parshas Tazria, Apr. 1-2

This Shabbos!

GWCK invites the entire community to a
Shabbos of Inspiration

At Young Israel Shomrai Emunah
Parshas Tazria April 1-2

Inspiring *Divrei Torah* and lectures by GWCK Scholars!

Uplifting tefillos and zemiros led by acclaimed baal tefillah and singer, Uri Davidi!

A ruach-filled Oneg Shabbos open to all!

With
Uri Davidi

