



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

### Ill-gotten Riches

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

**When you arrive in the land of Canaan... I will place a Tzara'as affliction upon a house in the land of your possession. (14:34)**

Our Parsha discusses the Tzara'as affliction that can develop on the walls of one's house, which results in the demolition of the house. The Midrash, quoted by Rashi, explains the proverbial "silver lining" of this affliction. The previous inhabitants of the land before the Jewish nation inherited it, Canaanites, hid their valuables in the walls of their homes. These valuables would have remained undiscovered had Hashem not placed the Tzara'as affliction on the wall. When the wall was demolished due to the affliction, the great treasure was discovered.

This Midrash is difficult to understand. Tzara'as is a punishment for sinful behavior (see Arachin 15b-16a), especially hurtful speech, haughtiness, and stinginess. Does the Midrash mean to suggest that the homeowner would not have discovered the treasures if they would have been careful with their speech and deeds, and only became wealthy because they did not act in the proper way?

Rav Pam answers that not every house held a treasure within its walls (or else everyone would just demolish their home immediately upon moving in!). Only those destined to become rich in any case were providentially given such homes. If such a person was worthy, their predestined wealth would have come to them easily and honorably. But, if they were sinners, they would still receive the wealth destined for them, but that wealth would come in a shameful way – such as having their homes publicly demolished due to Tzara'as. Had they been careful about acting and speaking properly they would not have had to go through such trouble to receive the riches.

We learn from here a vital lesson. A person should not think that their only recourse is to act improperly or to fight over money. Each person will receive what is destined for them. If they act properly, they will get it honorably, but if not, they will only get it through shame and hardship. Acting dishonestly will change nothing for the better.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

***K'nega (Something like an affliction) has appeared to me in the house... (14:35)***

***A man or woman in whom there will be nega (an affliction)... (Tazria 13:29)***

***If there will be tzara'as nega (affliction) on a garment... (Tazria 13:47)***

Why does the Torah use the word "like a" in reference to the tzara'as of the house?

### Parsha Riddle

***What does eating Matzah have in common with a house with tzara'as?***

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

**Last week's riddle:**

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

**Answer: Nazir 33b**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

The end of *parashas Metzora* sets forth the laws of *niddah* and *zavah*. While this *parashah* includes only the laws of *tumah* and *taharah* (ritual impurity and purity), which have very limited applicability in contemporary times, the succeeding *parashiyos* of *Acharei Mos* (18:19) and *Kedoshim* (20:18) add a prohibition against, and punishment for, marital relations with a woman who is a *niddah* or *zavah*, which remain central to observant Jewish life today.

It is rather surprising that the most publicly visible and iconic of the laws of *niddah* and *zavah*, the requirement of *mikvah* immersion in order to return to a state of purity, is actually nowhere explicit in the Biblical text. While bathing or immersing in water – unequivocally understood in the Oral Law to refer to *mikvah* immersion – is mentioned in the Written Torah in various other contexts of *tumah* and *taharah*, it is strikingly absent from the discussions in these three *parashiyos* of the laws of *niddah* and *zavah* (see *Tosafos Yevamos* 47b s.v. *be-Makom*). This puzzling absence notwithstanding, our tradition unanimously insists on *mikvah* immersion as the *sine qua non* of emerging from *niddah* and *zavah* status. As Rambam declares (*Issurei Biah* 11:16):

A woman does not ascend from her state of ritual impurity and cease being considered as an *ervah* until she immerses herself in a *mikvah* that is halachically acceptable while there are no substances intervening between her flesh and the ... water

If, by contrast, she washes in a bath – even if all the water in the world passes over her – her state is the same after washing as before washing [and a man who engages in relations with her is liable] for *kereit*. For there is no way of ascending from a state of ritual impurity to one of purity except through immersing in the waters of a ... *mikveh*, a spring, or a sea which is like a spring

Rambam's emphatic insistence that a woman's status does not change "even if all the water in the world passes over her" is an allusion to a vehement campaign he led against a custom that he decries as heretical, sinful, and evil, but which he records as being ubiquitous among Egyptian Jewish women in his time, to substitute the pouring of water over themselves (either by themselves or by their friends) for *mikvah* immersion (*Shut. ha-Rambam* [5720] #242).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. I could make you homeless.
2. I could destroy your house.
3. I could get you shaved.
4. I could ruin your clothes.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I start the burning.
2. I am a check, but can't be cashed.
3. No torches allowed.
4. I am a night activity.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 The moon** (My renewal and the Menorah were similar, I fill up halfway, I make you give "Shalom," My complaining mad me small.)

**#2 Tzara'as** (I lock you up, I make a treasure hunt, Wash your clothes, Visit the barber.)

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**Greater Washington Community Kollel wishes all of its friends, supporters, participants, and the entire community, a good Yom Tov!**

**The Kollel's classes will resume Sunday, May 1.**

