



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Small Talk. Big Impact.

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

The Parshiyos of Tazria and Metzora deal at length with the laws of *tzaraas*, a leprocy-like blemish with a complex set of regulations for its identification and purification. One of the unique aspects of the *tumah* (ritual impurity) of *tzaraas* is that even though the blemish is already present, its impure status does not take effect until it is declared *tameh* (impure) by a Kohen. Similarly, after the *tzaraas* heals, the blemish is not considered pure until declared so by a Kohen. This is not the case for other sources of *tumah* where no declaration of a Kohen is needed for the *tumah* to take effect. Why is *tzaraas* unique in this manner?

The Talmud (Arachin 15b) teaches that *tzaraas* comes as a consequence of *lashon hara* (evil speech). A person who speaks ill of others does not recognize the power and potency of his or her words. Our words can have a profoundly negative impact on other people when we misuse them. Accordingly, explains the Chofetz Chaim, the Torah placed the authority and control of the status of the *tzaraas* in the hands – or more specifically the mouth – of the Kohen, to teach us how potent our words can be and the impact they can have on others.

But just as the authority to render the *tzaraas tameh* is placed in the hands of the Kohen, so too is the ability to render it *tahor* (pure). It is not only negative speech that can profoundly impact another person, but so too can positive speech. A kind word or sincere compliment can go a long way in lifting another person's spirit or imbuing them with confidence to face the next hurdle in life. A little small talk can make a big impact.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

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 or she has tzaraas?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

For which two sins were special offerings brought during the inauguration of the Mishkan?

Answer: A calf for the Golden Calf, and a goat for the sale of Yosef, when they dipped his coat in goat's blood.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Much of *parashiyos Tazria* and *Metzora* discuss the laws of *tzara'as*, an affliction of the body, garments, and houses. These laws are not practiced today, although it is unclear why, as Rambam rules:

The purification of a person afflicted by *tzara'as* is carried out in Eretz Yisrael and in the Diaspora, while the Temple is standing and in the era when the Temple is not standing. (*Tumas Tzara'as* 11:6, based on *Tosefta Nega'im* ch. 8)

R. Yisrael Lipschitz records that he had long wondered about this, and that when he was young he had posed the question to R. Akiva Eiger, who replied that he, too, had wondered about this, and that he had no convincing answer (*Mareh Kohein* [introduction to *Maseches Nega'im*] #39).

Various reasons have been suggested for the desuetude of these laws:

- Some note Rambam's assertion that a *metzora* is only considered impure insofar as he or she has been "declared impure by a priest whose lineage is established," (*Terumos* 7:9), and suggest that the absence of such priests in contemporary times forestalls the practice of the laws of *tzara'as* (*Radvaz Terumos ibid.*; *Toldos Adam* (Lvov 5624) p. 35a; *Shut. le-Horos Nasan* 14:155:11-12). (A more complex explanation rooted in this basic idea is proposed by R. Lipschitz himself.)
- R. Yaakov Emden suggests that the laws regarding the impurity of the *metzora* are irrelevant today, since we are all ritually impure regardless (*She'eilas Yaavetz* 1:136).
- Some early sources assert that the laws of *tzara'as* are indeed not practiced subsequent to the destruction of the Temple, although it is difficult to know whether to take this claim at face value in light of the *Tosefta* mentioned above (see *Torah Sheleimah chelek 8 / krach 9* from p. 255).
- R. Menachem Kasher suggests (based on passages in the Sifra and Talmud Yerushalmi) that an actual living tradition, involving personal observation of one's teacher applying these laws, is required in order to apply them oneself. This tradition was broken, and so cannot be restored (*Torah Sheleimah ibid.*)
- Some suggest that we simply lack the necessary expertise (to properly identify the various types of *nega'im*) to practice these laws (see Dr. Sudi Namir, "*Tzara'as*" *be-Zeman ha-Zeh – Basis Hilchati*).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not just a Jewish music group.
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

Last Week's Answers

#1 Kos/Owl (My cheeks look like yours, Don't confuse me with a cup, I am around at night, I do give a hoot.)

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

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Led by Rabbi Avraham Sussman

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