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BE IN SHUL THIS SHABBOS



EARLY  
SHABBOS  
MINCHA 7:10 PM

JOIN OUR PARSHA AND  
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All advertisements in this publica-  
tion should not be read on shabbos.

Thank you to our Gabbaim Ephrayim Yurowitz and Tzvi Blech

## Shabbos Zmanim CANDLE LIGHTING 7:36 PM

**EARLY FRIDAY MINCHA: 1:30 PM** & every 15 minutes until **4:30 PM**

**FRIDAY NIGHT MINCHA/KABALLAS SHABBOS**

in 18 Main	20 Upstairs - Chabad	Shkiya
<b>7:10 PM</b>	<b>7:46 PM</b>	<b>7:54 PM</b>

**SHABBOS SHACHRIS**

20 Upstairs- Vasikin	18 Main- Ashkenaz	Tent 'x	20 Upstairs - Chabad	in 18 Main
<b>5:12 AM</b>	<b>8:00 AM</b>	<b>9:15 AM</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>

**SHABBOS MINCHA/MAARIV**

Pirchei	18 Main Mincha	Shkiya	Tent 'x Maariv :40	18 Main Maariv :50
<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>	<b>7:55 PM</b>	<b>8:35 PM</b>	<b>8:45 PM</b>

**LATE MAARIV MOTZEI SHABBOS:** Every 15 minutes from **9:30 PM** until **11:00 PM** | 18 Main

## Weekday Zmanim

**SHACHRIS:**

Vasikin, from **6:15 AM** every 15 min until a half hour before chatzos

**MINCHA:**

From mincha gedola until a half hour before shkia is every 15 min. | From a half hour before shkia until 60 is every 5 min. | 12 min. before plag and 12 min before shkia

**MAARIV:**

Plag | From shkia until 72 every 5 min. | From 72 until 11:00 PM is every 10 min. | From **11:00 PM** to **2:00 AM** every 15 min.

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## RABBI DANIEL COREN



### The Great News

Chazal teach us that when it comes to *tzara'as* in one's home, it's a *besorah tova* - great news. It sounds very strange to call a severe punishment like *tzara'as* great news. Part of the explanation is that if one must knock down his home because of the spread of *tzara'as*, he will end up finding a treasure that was left in the walls by the Amorites who lived in Israel before Bnai Yisrael entered. This makes things even more complicated. It certainly can't mean that one should speak *loshon hara* in his home when he gets to Israel so that he can be rewarded with hidden treasures in his walls!

I was thinking of an explanation that connects to an idea I mentioned on *Achron Shel Pesach*, on which we had a beautiful *neilas hachag*. There is a *passuk* that we recite at a *bris* רב של רב "שש אנוכי על אמרתך כמוצא שלל רב" - I rejoice over your words, Hashem, like finding a great booty." What does Dovid Hamelech mean?

On *Achron Shel Pesach*, we explained that part of fulfilling the commandment of *Anochi Hashem Elokecha* - (which means to know that Hashem is the One who took us out of Egypt and we believe he is the Creator and the only one G-d in the world) is that he will send us Mashiah, who will redeem us, and the world will be transformed into a peaceful, joyful, and pleasurable state in which all bad that we ever experienced will be totally forgotten. This must be part of *Anochi* because the true defining of Hashem is that He is only good, and even when He punishes us, it's really emanating from good.

Dovid Hamelech teaches that even when things are tough, even when a baby is being cut and made to bleed, and one might even think how cruel – after all, the Rama says we don't say *Shehecheyanu* by a *bris* because of the pain of the baby – we must see the good. Thus, regarding a *bris* as cruel is a grave mistake. When a baby is circumcised, he is entering into the best covenant a human can enter into – a covenant with the Creator. Yes, the course of life is sometimes really tough, but the challenge is to know, believe, and feel that all is for the best.

This is the message of *negaim*. Hashem doesn't punish us for no reason; He wants us to grow, to wake up, and to take advantage of the real treasures of the world, Torah and *mitzvos*. Then, we will truly enjoy and merit the good in the next world.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

SEMICHAS CHAVER SHIUR in R' Coren's office every Wednesday at 9:00 PM

## RABBI EFREM GOLDBERG



### Allowing in the Light

The Torah in *Parshas Tazria* introduces the subject of *tzara'as* by speaking of an אדם, a person, who has a discoloration on עור בשרו – “the skin of his flesh.” The Sefas Emes finds it significant that the Torah refers to the individual here specifically with the term אדם and that it specifies that the affliction appears not simply on בשרו, the person's flesh, but on עור בשרו – “the skin of his flesh.” This *pasuk*, the Sefas Emes explains, brings us back to the story of Adam Ha-rishon, of his banishment from Gan Eden. After he and Chava partook of the forbidden fruit, they suddenly felt ashamed by not wearing clothing, so G-d made ערות עור, leather garments, for them to wear. The word עור, the Sefas Emes writes, is related to the word עוור – “blind.” The garments made for Adam and Chava after their sin signify the state of “blindness” in which human beings live ever since that tragic event. Before Adam and Chava's sin, there was a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, between what is good for us and what isn't. Temptation existed externally, as represented by the snake, a different creature that lured man to sin. Internally, however, Adam and Chava lived with clarity. After the sin, we live with “coverings” that “blind” us. We now struggle to see the difference between right and wrong; temptation makes sin and vice seem attractive and alluring, blinding us to their evil.

However, the Sefas Emes writes, this covering is porous. There are small holes through which light can enter to give us clarity, to resolve the confusion, to show us what is right and what is wrong. Even in our condition of “blindness,” the darkness is not complete. We have sources of light, of guidance, that clarify for us what is right and what is wrong. The Torah here warns that a נגע, a spiritual affliction, occurs when it seals עור בשרו, blocking the “perforations” in the “covering” that allow the light to enter. A person is plagued when the holes are sealed, when the “blindness” becomes complete, and he can no longer distinguish between right and wrong.

The takeaway from this deep insight of the Sefas Emes is that we must always ensure to keep the “perforations” open, to allow the light of clarity and truth into our lives. Ever since Adam and Chava's sin in Gan Eden, we live in darkness, in confusion, blinded by temptation. This is the struggle that every person must go through each day of their life. In order to successfully wage this battle, we must allow the light in, to remain open to receiving guidance and instruction. We need to learn and expose ourselves to those who can instruct us and show us where we need to go. If we close ourselves off to guidance, if we do not pursue knowledge or inspiration, then we thrust ourselves into total darkness, we become completely “blinded,” and will then, G-d forbid, experience נגעים, spiritual maladies, which can be very difficult to cure.

COUNTING DOWN UNTIL  
**UMAN**

159 DAYS





## The Unlearned Kohen

The Torah portion of *Tazria* discusses the laws of *tzaraat*, an unusual illness, identified by a white patch appearing on the skin of a person, that was symptomatic of a profound emotional and spiritual blemish within this individual. This, plus several secondary symptoms, determined the person as being temporarily "impure" and required him or her to separate from the community and undergo an intense program of introspection and healing.

The Torah states that only a *Kohen* (a priest), a descendent of Aaron, the High Priest of the tribe of Levi, was authorized to diagnose a *tzaraat*-leprosy and pronounce the malady as such. Even in a case where all the symptoms of the illness are clearly present, and a multitude of scholars recognize it as *tzaraat*, the person cannot be diagnosed as possessing this malady unless a *Kohen* states so explicitly.

The ramifications of this Biblical law are far-reaching. For example, even if the only *Kohen* present is a child, so that he is unable to examine the person in question, a trust-

worthy scholar needs to report his findings to the *Kohen*, and it is only the *Kohen* who may pronounce the white-patched person as impure. Even if the only *Kohen* around is an imbecile ("*shoteh*"), lacking the knowledge and understanding required to give a diagnosis, it is only he who is entitled to make the verbal pronouncement under the instruction and guidance of an adult scholar.

Why was the *Kohen* so indispensable to this process? Shouldn't the scholar, who is intricately familiar with the symptoms of this malady, be trusted more than a child-*Kohen* who can do nothing more than utter a diagnosis determined by someone else? What is needed here is an expert in these illnesses and symptoms, not a priest!

### CONDUITS OF BLESSING

More than three millennia ago, the *Kohanim* were charged with the mission of blessing the Jewish people.

The *Kabbalah* explains that the *Kohanim* were designated to be the conduits for Divine blessings because their souls evolve from the celestial chamber of love, granting them a unique ability to cultivate compassion and kindness toward others, and hence, making

them uniquely suitable conduits for G-d's love and grace.

The *Zohar*, the basic text of the *Kabbalah*, explains that this is why, traditionally, an unmarried *Kohen* could not serve as an agent of the Jewish people performing the services in the Holy Temple (Beit Hamikdash) in Jerusalem.

In order for the *Kohen* to be worthy of this extraordinary position, he had to fully develop his innate capacity for love and selflessness, and it is only through marriage, in which one learns to share one's life with another human being, that a person is challenged to bring out their full potential for caring and affection.

Ultimately, when you are unmarried, you need not answer but to yourself, which is why so many people today opt for the single life. It is only in the institution of marriage that you are consistently called upon to take another person and their needs and feelings seriously. For a marriage to work and blossom, you can't be selfish. That is why it was only the married *Kohen* who was charged with the responsibility of serving G-d in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

**MONDAY & THURSDAY** Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)

**SHABBOS** Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)

PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.

## UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOM BER MUNITZ



### IYYAR – אני " רופאך – TORAH BRINGS HEALING

Surely you will find the right words with which to explain to ... that his response of "I am entirely incapable of learning Torah at present because I am in pain," is similar to one who is ill and refuses to take medication with the excuse that he is ill. Similarly, our Sages, of blessed memory, have informed us that "Torah brings healing to the world," and "He whose head or body aches should study Torah." While it is understandable that in-depth study is difficult while one is in pain, an effort should nevertheless be made. Surely, one can at least study with less concentration...

==== *Igros Kodesh V15 p175*

## CHOFETZ CHAIM HERITAGE FOUNDATION

### A Rule Is a Rule!

#### THE DILEMMA

"I run a *gemach*. One of the rules of the *gemach* is that if someone took a loan from us and paid back late, they cannot get a loan again. So here's the story. A few months ago, Yossi needed a loan to pay for his daughter's *chasunah*, but he paid it back late. Now, Yossi needs to consolidate his credit card bills, so he approached our *gemach* for a new loan. The rules are the rules— what could I do? I had to refuse. But I was feeling very bad about it, so I came up with a solution, and told Yossi: 'Usually, we need two guarantors for the loan. If you bring four guarantors, I'll

give it to you.' Yossi brought four people who agreed to pay back the loan if he didn't. Now I am wondering if I should tell them that Yossi paid back the first loan late?"

Chaim, from the *gemach*

#### THE HALACHA

It's *loshon hora* to say that someone paid late. Paying late doesn't make Yossi a credit risk. Many people pay their loans or bills late. Since the guarantors might back out if Chaim informs them, Chaim would be causing Yossi an unjustified loss, and they shouldn't be told. However, if Yossi defaulted on even part of the old loan, the guarantors should be warned.



## Birchas Ilanos Part II

I would like to share some more highlights about *Birchas Ilanos*, the yearly *brocha* recited on the newly sprouting trees.

### AFTER CHODESH NISSAN

Although the month of Nissan is over, it is not too late to recite the *brocha*. The Gemara writes that the *brocha* is recited when someone goes out during Nissan, which sounds like it is referring to the month of Nissan. However, the *poskim* explain that the expression Nissan is used in referring to the spring season – known as *tekufas* Nissan, which usually begins in Chodesh Nissan – but the *brocha* can be recited afterwards as well.

This is clear from the fact that the *poskim* stipulate that the *brocha* must be recited while only the blossoms are there, and once the fruits start to sprout, it is too late. Since the fruits always sprout after Nissan, it is clear that the end of Nissan is not the cut-off point for reciting the *brocha*. In fact, as the *poskim* point out, Nissan is not always the beginning of the spring. In the Southern Hemisphere, the summer has just ended, and the fall is beginning.

Obviously, in those places the *brocha* will be recited Sukkos time, which is the beginning of the spring.

It is interesting to note that the *Chasam Sofer*, in his glosses to *Shulchan Aruch*, quotes his illustrious rebbe, Rav Nasan Adler, that the Gemara means the first 30 days of spring, known as *tekufas* Nissan.

The *Yismach Moshe* writes that there is no question that one should recite the *brocha* even after Chodesh Nissan. This is because one should always be thanking Hashem, and thanking Hashem for the blossoming of the new trees should not have an expiration date.

He suggests another reason for why the Gemara uses the expression “when one goes out during Nissan.” This can be to bring out the point that the *brocha* is only recited once a year and not after thirty days have elapsed and a person sees other trees blossoming. This is different than other similar *brochos*. For example, in regards to reciting the *brocha* of *she’hecheyanu* on new fruits, we can recite the *brocha* on each fruit. Similarly, if one sees different fascinating sights, such as tall mountains and oceans, after thirty days have elapsed, the *brocha* can be recited again. However, the Gemara teaches us that this *brocha* is a once-a-year blessing, in appreciation of the new season, and is not to be recited more than once.

The *sefer Lihoros Nasan* adds that the Gemara mentions Chodesh Nissan because that is usually when the blossoming of the trees is at its peak, making it the most preferable time to recite the *brocha*, if feasible.

However, the *Kaf Hachaim* quotes the *Chida*, that *al pi Kabbalah*, the *brocha* must be recited specifically during Nissan, and if the month of Nissan has passed, one should recite the *brocha* without using Hashem’s name. But the

*poskim* maintain that one can recite the *brocha* even after Chodesh Nissan has passed.

### CAN THE BROCHA BE RECITED ON SHABBOS?

The *Kaf Hachaim* writes that one should not recite the *brocha* on Shabbos because we are concerned that one might take a branch off the tree. However, the *Bitzeil Hachachma* writes that the *minhag* is that people do recite the *brocha* on Shabbos, and we are not concerned that one will pull off a branch. We find this in regard to the *halachic* distinction between smelling an *esrog* that is still on the tree and smelling a *hadas* branch that is on the tree. One cannot smell an *esrog* that is still on the tree because there is concern that they will enjoy the aroma and want to eat the *esrog*, thus necessitating pulling the *esrog* off the tree. However, when it comes to a *hadas*, it can be enjoyed while attached to the tree, and there is no concern that one will pull off the branch.

Others suggest that we are concerned that one will carry the *siddur* to recite the *brocha*. This is similar to the reason that we do not recite *tashlich* on Shabbos, due to the concern that someone may carry the *machzor* in a place where there is no *eiruv*.

### IN CONCLUSION

According to most *poskim*, the *brocha* can still be recited even after the month of Nissan is over, and many allow reciting it on Shabbos. It is a once-a-year blessing, in appreciation of the new season.

#### KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara  
Currently: מסכת יומא  
Friday - Shuirim

Beinyonei Dyoma  
and relevant topics

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## HEBREW ACADEMY OF CLEVELAND

### Negaim and Tehillim

*This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification. (14:2)*

We no longer have the affliction/purification process of *tzara'as*, spiritual leprosy. This is the consequence of a degraded spiritual condition. Degradation applies at a time and circumstance in which our people are on an elevated moral standing, so that the failing is noticeable in contrast to the spiritual status we are expected to maintain. Since we lost our Bais Hamikdash, and our spirituality plummeted, we have no longer been on the spiritual plateau deserving of such a manifestation. To put it in simple terms, the term "sick" applies to one who is otherwise healthy. Likewise, in spiritual health, one must be spiritually robust in order for the affliction to manifest a contrast.

We find that David Hamelech prayed that one who recites *Tehillim* be considered as if he were occupied in the laws of *negaim* and *ohalos*, spiritual afflictions and areas of spiritual contamination and purity. These are one of the most difficult areas of Torah law. To achieve erudition in the laws of *negaim* and *ohalos* demands much toil and devotion to studying the subject. Reciting *Tehillim* does not seem to be that demanding. How are these two connected?

Horav David M'Tolna *zt'l* explains that *negaim* distinguish themselves in the fact that *tumah* and *taharah* – rendering of spiritual defilement or purity – are determined by the *Kohen* and dependent upon his articulation of the word "*tamei*." *Tumah* and *taharah* must be vocalized by the *Kohen*. This is the case even if the *Kohen* was not learned and not fluent in the laws of *negaim*, and even if the *Kohen* was not in complete control of his faculties. Even if such a *Kohen* is asked to render his opinion, the actual pronunciation of "*tamei*" must be delivered by the *Kohen*, who might, in such a situation, be clueless to the proceedings. Such a *Kohen* knows not what he is saying because he is unfamiliar with the law. Yet, his enunciation of the word "*tamei*" renders the afflicted person a *metzora*.

This is what David Hamelech requested of Hashem. When a Jew pours out his heart in the recitation of *Tehillim* – even if he knows not what he is saying – i.e., he does not understand the profundity of the words that he is reciting – it should be as effective as the *Kohen's* elocution of the word "*tamei*." Just reading the words of *Tehillim* with sincerity should be able to arouse Heavenly compassion so that whatever decree hangs over us is rescinded. We now have some idea of the sanctity of the "words" of *Sefer Tehillim*.

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“Speak to the B’nei Yisroel saying: When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male, she shall be impure for a seven-day period, as during the days of her *niddah* flow, she shall be impure.” It says in *Vayikra Rabbah*: “אם זכה אדם אומרים: לו אתה קדמת לכל מעשה בראשית, ואם לאו, אומרים לו יתוש קדמך שלשול קדמך” – “If a man is worthy, the *Malachim* say to him: ‘You preceded all the work of Creation.’ But if one is not worthy, they say to him: ‘The gnat preceded you, the earthworm preceded you.’” If, in fact, the gnat and the earthworm came before man, how can the *Malachim* possibly say that he preceded all the work of Creation?

The *Alshich* explains that Hashem

put *chiyus*, a life source, into the world for the six days of Creation, which would not extend past those six days. The *koach* of *shemiras Shabbos* then gives life to Shabbos and to the following six days. Every day of the week has its life source from the previous Shabbos. If not for the *koach shemiras Shabbos* at any time, there would no longer be a world.

A Yid is full of potential. If a Yid heeds *Shabbos Kodesh* properly, he becomes a partner with the *Melech Malchei Hamalachim*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the Creation of the world. People assume that the world was created years ago and that same world keeps going. However, this is incorrect, for in fact, Hakodosh Boruch Hu has to constantly infuse life into this world in order for it to keep going. The world is not on autopilot; rather, it is constantly being run. Hashem put things into place in this world, and the world can only have a *kiyum* through Shabbos being kept, as well as the Torah and *mitzvos*. Hashem tells us that if we heed *Shabbos Kodesh* properly, and if we keep the Torah and

*mitzvos*, He will make us a partner in the Creation of the world. Thus, if we in fact are “*zoche*,” we become partners in the current world we live in. If we are in fact partners in the Creation of the world, that means that we came before everything in this world.

While in the initial Creation of the world, man was created last – after the gnat – however, this is a new world, with a new life source, and in this world, he came first. However, if one is *chas v’sholom* not *zoche*, he does not heed *Shabbos Kodesh* or perform the *mitzvos* properly, he has no connection to being a partner in the new world we live in. Rather, in regards to him, we reference the beginning of Creation and tell him that, in fact, he was created even after the gnat. This is to make him remain humble and, hopefully, turn towards Hashem so that he, too, can become a partner with Hashem in the Creation of the world. May we all be *zoche* to become partners with Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the Creation of the world.



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Learning at the Night Kollel

# RABBI ASHER SINCLAIR



## Windbag

*"This is the law of the metzora... (14:2)*

One of the causes of the spiritual affliction called *tzara'at* was gossip and slander. The Torah considers these sins very grave. Habitual gossip and slander are equivalent to all three cardinal sins of idol worship, murder, and adultery. Someone who habituates himself to this kind of speech forfeits his place in the future world. (*Erchin* 15b)

Primarily, we are physical creatures; at best, our soul is a lodger in the house of the body. We find spiritual concepts abstruse and difficult to grasp. A blood-strewn battlefield makes more of an im-

pression on us than the silent holocaust of character assassination.

For this reason, the *metzora* is brought to the *kohen*. This person, who was so cavalier with his words, who did not understand the power of speech, stands in front of the *kohen*, and with one word, the *kohen* decides his fate, "*tahor*" or "*tamei*," "pure" or "impure." Just one word can return him to the society of man, and just one word can banish him to solitude and ostracism.

*"For behold, He forms mountains and creates winds; He recounts to a person his conversation."* (Amos 4:13)

Ostensibly, the first half of this verse

has little to do with the second. However, the prophet is answering the question, "Of what importance is a word? Words have no substance."

*"...behold, He forms mountains..."*

G-d created lofty mountains, vast expanses of impervious rock. *"...And creates winds..."* And yet the wind, which has no substance whatsoever, wears them down to an anthill. *"He recounts to a person his conversation."* This fact should remind us that even though our words are as formless as the wind, they have the power to reduce great worlds to nothing.

Sources: Dubner Magid and Mayana Shel Torah in *Iturei Torah*

# RABBI SHALOM ROSNER



## Parenting in the Parsha

After a woman gives birth, she is commanded to offer two *korbanos*. As the *pasuk* states: "*Keves ben shenaso l'olah, uben yonah oh tor l'chatas*" (*Vayikra* 12:6). The Torah clearly dictates that the first offering is an *olah* that is to be consumed totally, and no one may eat the meat of the offering, and the second is a *chatas*, which may be consumed by a *Kohen*. Offering an *olah* is appropriate as an expression of appreciation for having been granted a child. But why bring a *chatas*, which is typically required of someone who committed an unintentional transgression? Several *mefarshim* (based on *Niddah* 31b) explain that perhaps while experiencing the pain of child labor, the woman may have sworn not to get pregnant again and go through this agony. She, therefore, offers a *chatas* to atone for her inadvertent promise, which she likely regrets after seeing the results of her labor.

There is something unusual, though, with respect to the order of the *korbanos* that the *yoledes* offers. The Gemara (*Zevachin* 7b) states that when one offers both a *korban chatas* and a *korban olah*, the *korban chatas* should be brought first to symbolize *sur mei'rah* (requesting forgiveness from the unintentional trans-

gression), followed by the *korban olah*, which represents the *asei tov* (a complete submission to Hashem) and an expression of gratitude. First, you wipe the slate clean, and then, you offer a present. If that is the case, then why are the *korbanos* offered by the *yoledes* in the opposite order, as the *pasuk* dictates that she first offers an *olah* followed by a *chatas*?

The Menachem Zion (son-in-law of R' Tzvi Pesach Frank) offers a fascinating insight highlighting the relevance of the symbolic nature of these *korbanos*. Perhaps, hidden in this slight nuance is the secret to successful parenting.

On the one hand, every parent has aspirations for their child and dreams and hopes for their future success. In Hebrew, this is referred to as *she'ifos*.

On the other hand, reality, or *met'zius*, kicks in, and often those original hopes and goals are not attained. It is crucial for a parent to set the bar high, have their children reach for the stars, yet be appreciative and satisfied with what their hard efforts actually achieved. A parent should provide a child with all the tools necessary for their success, bearing in mind, *chanoch l'na'ar al pi darko*, that each child is different and is blessed with unique capabilities with which they can flourish. We must proceed cautiously, so

as not to expect too much, but be certain not to shoot for mediocrity, or the result will be inferiority.

Unfortunately, sometimes, as parents and grandparents, we are negligent in both directions. On the one hand, we often try to push the children even beyond their capabilities, maybe trying to have them do what we want to accomplish instead of thinking about what's good for *them*. This could then lead to our feelings of disappointment and their feelings of failure. But on the other hand, we sometimes are too reticent and passive in regard to our children. In our very open world, we as parents, at times, forget that we are tasked with educating our children and not leaving them with the freedom to choose at every corner. We need to motivate them as much as possible to reach for the stars and make the most out of every spiritual opportunity that presents itself.

The *yoledes* brings the *olah* first to symbolize that a parent should reach for the stars and expect the best from their child. Yet, the *olah* is followed by a *chatas* to symbolize that in reality, even if our child is not perfect, they are still holy, as a *chatas* that is partly offered to Hashem and partly consumed here on Earth by the *Kohen*.

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### Overlooking the Faults of Others

"On the day healthy flesh appears in it, it shall be impure" (*Vayikra* 13:14). There is a day on which you look, and there is a day on which you do not look. From here, we derive that a *chassan* is granted all seven days of his celebration. Similarly, on a festival, we do not pronounce anyone impure (Rashi). We do not mar the celebration of a *chassan* or of anyone during *Yom Tov* (*Sifsei Chachamim*).

The *kohein* shall look at the affliction (*negah*), the *kohein* shall look at it (*v'ra'ahu*) and make him impure (13:3). Alternatively, *v'ra'ahu* means he shall look at him. Objectively, the person has a *negah*. But the *kohein* looks at the whole person. If he is a *chassan*, or it is a *Yom Tov*, the person is not examined and remains pure (*Mesech Chochma*).

Perhaps this *halacha* contains a critical lesson for a *chassan* and *kallah* as well. The first week of marriage can be very disturbing. Suddenly, the *chassan* or *kallah* may discover a *negah* that could not have been seen earlier. Personal habits or physical blemishes unnoticed during courtship and engagement become apparent upon marriage.

A new spouse may, as recent works have described, have a different way of squeezing toothpaste from a tube, which can be disconcerting. More serious and objective flaws of personal conduct or appearance can lead to disappointment or worse.

What is the proper response? Look at the whole person. You chose to marry an individual who has many wonderful attributes. You were attracted by your spouse's positive traits and unique character. Do not look at the negative, at the new blemish or flaw that marriage exposes.

The *chassan* must look at the *kallah* as a wonderful whole person and overlook any newly discovered negatives. In turn, *middah k'neged middah*, we overlook his negatives and consider him, the whole person, pure.

The laws of impurity of a *negah* return after the week of celebration. But the lesson of overlooking one's spouse's shortcomings must last for a lifetime.

On holidays, all of Israel gathered in *Yerushalayim*. Persons deemed ritually impure all year long were granted the status of *chaveirim*, expert practitioners of ritual law (*Chagiga* 26a). Again, since we are all required to overlook the flaws of others usually designated as "*am ha'aretz*," the *kohein* does not examine our *negaim* on *Yom Tov*, and we remain pure.

After the holiday, the impurity of the *am ha'aretz* returns. But the lesson of overlooking the shortcomings of others must remain all year long.

One who judges his friend favorably, Hashem judges him favorably (*Shabbos* 127b). This cannot mean giving others the benefit of the doubt since Hashem has no doubts. Rather, we should not judge the clear faults of others objectively but find an extenuating circumstance that avoids a negative judgment. Then Hashem, *middah k'neged middah*, will judge us favorably despite His clear knowledge of our faults, based on extenuating circumstances (Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz).

Our obligation to focus on the positive and overlook blemishes applies to those closest to us, such as a spouse, especially a new one. It extends to those on a lower spiritual level, such as an *am ha'aretz*. And it includes friends with whom one interacts and all Jews who, in this sense, are *chaveirim*.

The response, both by the *kohein*, who overlooks our *negah*, and Hashem, Who overlooks our sins, is commensurate with our efforts. Viewing others positively is a critical component of spiritual purity.



### Spiritual Imbalances

This week's *parsha* is truly one of the most difficult subjects for people in our time to contemplate and understand, or from which to gain knowledge and inspiration. The entire subject of these mysterious diseases, which manifested themselves on the human body, on clothing, and even on houses and buildings, is technically discussed in the Mishna and also in various places in the Talmud itself. However, the fact that the subject is discussed does not really reveal the underlying pathology of these diseases, nor does it help explain it to us in a purely rational fashion.

We are all aware that the Talmud connects the disease to the sin of slandering others and improper speech. Nevertheless, the mystery of the cause, diagnosis, and cure for the condition remains a troubling and hidden matter. It is beyond my ability to add any new insights into this age-old discussion by the great scholars of Israel. I think, though, that we simply have to accept that there are physical diseases that manifest themselves because of spiritual failings, whatever those failings may be and however they are interpreted.

We are all aware that there are psychosomatic diseases that can and often do become actually physical. Medical science has not yet been able to determine why such phenomena occur. Well, just as there are, so to speak, mentally-caused diseases, the Torah informs us that there are also spiritually-caused diseases that actually affect one's body, clothing, and even one's home. There are many events and occurrences in life, both personal and national, that defy logic or any form of human understanding.

The Torah does indicate to us the areas of our lives where our human vulnerabilities exist and are apparent. Certainly, our bodies, our health, our appearance, and our general physical well-being rank as some of the most vulnerable of all human conditions. Our bodies are so delicately formed and perfectly balanced that even the slightest malfunction of any of their parts immediately causes pain and requires our attention.

The Torah expands this idea to include spiritual imbalances and shortcomings. We are usually never conscious of these matters, and if, in fact, they are pointed out to us by others, the usual reaction is one of resentment. So, through the mechanism of physical symptoms as described in this week's *parsha*, the Torah reminds us that we need to examine and purify ourselves spiritually and not merely physically.

Our bodies, our clothing, even our dwelling places require inspection and sanctification. Even though the physical manifestations of these shortcomings are no longer apparent in our time, the underlying lesson is still present in all of our actions and attitudes.

The realization that we can be woefully deficient in behavior unless we are constantly monitoring our relationship to our unique value system is essential for living a truly Jewish and observant life. We are responsible for discerning those weaknesses within us, even if they are not physically apparent. Perhaps this is the message to us from this week's *parsha*.

# RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT



## A Spiritual Disease with a Spiritual Cure

### ABARBANEL ON THE PARSHA OHR.EDU

In *Parshas Tazria*, the Abarbanel emphasized that the affliction of *tzara'at* was the physical manifestation of a spiritual imbalance in the individual that resulted from his transgressions. These physical symptoms create a state of *tumah*, or ritual contamination, which can be "transmitted" to others. It is nothing like a natural infectious disease where the physical symptoms are transmitted to others. Rather, what is transmitted is not a physical disease, but, rather, a state of ritual contamination. We are warned not to come in contact with such an individual, as the Torah warns us, "...you shall not contaminate your soul, your inner essence..." (Leviticus 11:44). Normal infectious diseases harm the body but not our inner essence.

This explains why an individual afflicted with *tzara'at* does not consult a physician. He deals only with the *kohanim*, who are the experts in dealing with ritual contamination. Only they are entrusted with the ability to declare an object or a person ritually contaminated or ritually pure.

*Parshat Metzora* begins with a detailed description of the ritual purification process required to restore the individual to a state of spiritual balance. Since his condition of *tzara'at* resulted from transgressions, one dimension of the process was to bring sacrificial offerings to atone for them, whether they were accidental or purposeful transgressions. This is necessary since the foundation of our religious faith and understanding is that everything that happens to a member of the Jewish Nation is a result of Divine Providence, in order "...to grant to each man according to his ways and the consequences of his deeds." (*Yirmiyahu* 32:19) Thus, each afflicted individual will understand that his behavior was the source of his affliction. After having brought the offerings for the intentional and unintentional transgressions, whether or not he was aware of them, he then brings the elevation-offering, which was totally consumed on the Altar, to demonstrate his renewed connection to G-d.

The Torah then describes in detail how the *kohen* applies blood from the guilt offering to the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe of the afflicted individual. He then places oil on the same areas and applies oil to the head as well. Abarbanel explains that the main reason for this ritual was to impress upon us that the true cure was Divine, purely the result of repentance and proper performance of the commandments. The individual had no need whatsoever for natural medical interventions and treatments. Actually, in order to emphasize the purely Divine nature of the cure, the "treatments" of the *kohen* were exactly the opposite of what doctors would normally do. Normal medical practices involved bloodletting. Here, the *kohen* does not extract any blood. Rather, he ritually places blood on those areas where the symptoms first appeared. Similarly, the oil teaches us that, unlike accepted medical practice, it is not necessary to empty excess fluid. Rather, we place oil on the individual to emphasize again the miraculous nature of the cure. Finally, whatever oil remains is placed on the head. As it says in *Kohelet* (9:8): "...let your head never lack oil." Oil is a metaphor for the wisdom which, hopefully, has been imparted to the afflicted individual as a result of his experience.

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## JOKES

### *The perfect shidduch*

A shadchan corners a bochur and says, "Do I have a girl for you!". "Not interested", replies the bochur. "But she's beautiful!", says the shadchan. "Looks aren't everything" says the bochur. "Yes. And she's very rich too." "Really?" "And she has great yichus, from a very fine and well known family." "Sounds great." says the bochur. "But why would a girl like that want to marry me? She'd have to be crazy." Replies the shadchan "Well, you can't have everything!"

### *IRS*

Rabbi Stern answers the phone. "Hello, is this Rabbi Stern?"  
"It is"  
"This is the IRS. Can you help us?"  
"I can"  
"Do you know a Kalman Klappenberger?"  
"I do"  
"Is he a member of your congregation?"  
"He is"  
"Did he donate \$10,000 to the synagogue?"  
"He will".

### *The Haircut Joke*

Moishe had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a Rov, if they could discuss the use of the car. His father took him to his study and said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study the Gemarah more, get your hair cut and we'll talk about it."

After about a month, the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss the use of the car. They again went to the father's study where his father said, "Son, I've been very proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've study Gemarah very diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut!" Moshe waited a moment and replied, "You know, Tatty, I've been thinking about that. You know, Simshon HaGibbur had long hair," To which his father replied, "Yes, and he WALKED everywhere he went!"

### *By Request*

A man is in a restaurant where a pianist is playing in a corner.  
"Do you play things on request?" calls the man to the pianist.  
"Oh yes, sir," says the pianist.  
"Great," says the man. "Play dominoes."

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