

of our uniqueness in society and clothing, we need to reaffirm our majesty through purification and offerings. That perhaps can give meaning to the laws of tuma and tahara.

HAFTORAH MELACHIM BET 4:42-5:19

This week's *haftorah* describes how a prophet miraculously cured an Aramite general of his *tzara'at* ailment. The *haftorah* begins with a brief mention of one of the prophet Elisha's miraculous feats. He received a paltry gift of twenty loaves of bread and a sack of grain. At Elisha's insistence, this gift was shared amongst his hundred students. The food was enough for all—and there were even leftovers.

Naaman, general of the powerful Aramite armies, contracted *tzara'at*. A young captive Israelite maid advised him to seek the assistance of the “prophet in Samaria.” Acting on this suggestion, the king of Aram dispatched a message to the king of Israel, “Behold I have sent Naaman my servant to you, and you shall cure him of his *tzara'at*!”

The king of Israel panicked, until Elisha sent him a message: “Why have you rent your garments? Let him come to me now, and let him know that there is a prophet in Israel!”

Elisha advised Naaman to immerse in the Jordan River. Despite his initial reluctance to do so, Naaman carried out the prophet's orders, and was immediately healed.

Elisha refused to accept any gifts from Naaman. The general promised Elisha that he would no longer serve any deity other than the One G-d, and he departed. ■



STATS

27th of 54 sedras; 4th of 10 in Vayikra.
128 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank: 48th.
9 Parshiyot, 5 open, 4 closed.
67 pesukim - ranks 48th (8th in Vayikra).
1010 words - 48th (8th in Vayikra).
3667 letters - 48th (8th in Vayikra).



MITZVOT

9 mitzvot; 7 positive; 2 prohibitions.

A SHORT VORT

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אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר וטמאה שבעת ימים (יב:)

“If a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy, she shall be ritually unclean for seven days” (12:2)

After reading last week's parsha, Parshat Shemini, which dealt with the impurity and purity amongst animals, this week's parsha will deal with impurity and purity amongst people.

Why does the Torah discuss these issues with animals prior to discussing these issues with man?

The *Ktav Sofer* (Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Sofer 1815-1871) answers that mankind, in principle is weaker and more vulnerable physically than any other living creature. Animals in the wild can obtain food without toil and preparations. Man, on the other hand, must work for his food and needed clothing. On a different perspective, man is on a higher level, being entrusted to serve G-d. This special relationship is only retained as long as man remains worthy to fulfill the ways of the Divine.

Once man squanders this spiritual level, he regresses to being lower than all other creatures in this world.

As quoted in the *Midrash Vayikra Rabbah*: “If man is worthy of it, they shall say of him: You come before all the works of creation. But if he is not worthy, they shall say of him: even the gnat comes before you.”

- Shabbat Shalom