

THOSE WHO THINK THEY KNOW BETTER, ARE NO BETTER

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

This week's *Parsha* follows upon the last, and describes the purification process of a cured *Metzora* - one who fell victim to the illness of *tzara'as*. At the conclusion of the process, he or she must bring sacrifices to the Temple, which are ordinarily two male and one female lambs. If, however, this is beyond what the individual can afford, the requirement is reduced to one male lamb and two doves or pigeons.

Rabbi Yisroel Mayer Kagen, known as the *Chofetz Chaim*, derives a lesson from this passage that is especially appropriate to those of us living outside large Jewish communities. He says that many people pray, learn and do *Mitzvos*, and they say to themselves, "well, if I'm not doing things so perfectly, at least I'm doing a great deal better than my friends and neighbors!"

They fail to realize - writes the Rabbi - that they are rich in knowledge that their friends lack. A poor person can bring two doves or pigeons, but a rich person who brings a poor man's sacrifice has not fulfilled his obligations. So too, while those who lack knowledge may be able to satisfy their Creator with minimal performance of the *Mitzvos*, those who "know better" are expected to act accordingly.

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The author is the Director of Project Genesis.