



Kingston Liberal Synagogue



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## Reflections from Rabbi René – Parashat Tazria

### We do not control everything

*Tzara'at* is the name of a rather gross skin disease, that affects the *metzora*, usually translated in English as leper. According to our Torah portion, the *metzora* is sent out in the desert until s/he is healed. When the priest witnesses that s/he is cured, the person can go back into the camp after a complex set of rituals and a period of seven days quarantine. If today we are able to cure leprosy, we are still facing many diseases for which no remedy exists, and now as then, quarantine is the only way to avoid it to spread. Somehow, we have forgotten, in the comfort of our lives, that we do not control everything in this world, and that there is something bigger than us that from time to time reminds us of our own frailty.



## Our relationships define us

The COVID-19 death toll is rising, and it has affected people close to us. Members of our own community have lost close relatives. We extend to them and to their families our deepest condolences. There is nothing we can do to avoid death, whatever form it takes, but we can, as did our ancestors, imagine rituals that will alleviate our pain and loss. When all this is over, we will come together to celebrate the lives of those who have lost theirs to COVID-19, and we will remember what truly matters. Last Shabbat, when asked what they were grateful for, people who were attending the online service mentioned two things: people and nature. Our relationships define us, and we draw strength from the world around. There is nothing more important than feeling anchored to a place where we belong.

Shabbat Shalom.

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