

A Lesson from the Metzora

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2018

Do you get a stomach ache when you feel nervous or excited? Isn't that strange? Why does your stomach react this way? Hashem created our bodies to be sensitive and to react to things which we think and feel. The Torah tells us that there was a time when people were so sensitive, that they could actually see a change on their skin because of something they said. When a person would speak bad things about other people over and over again, blotches of discolored skin would appear on his body. The Torah calls this person a metzora. The word "metzora" is short for three words in Hebrew meaning saying bad things about someone else ("motzi shem ra"). The blotches of leprosy is a type of impurity from which the metzora had to purify himself. If a person discovered it on his body, he had to leave the entire camp of the Jewish people and follow the Torah's instructions for purifying himself. He separated one Jew from another. Therefore, the Torah tells him that he must stay away from the rest of the people until he becomes purified. If the metzora has to stay alone, away from everyone else, who is going to help him become pure? The Kohen - priest - comes to purify him. The Kohanim are kind and loving for their fellow Jew. The metzora did not show love for his fellow when he spoke badly of others. He needs to be shown the right way to act — and the Kohen, with their strong love for their fellows, can do this job best. Because he cares for another Jew, even a metzora, the Kohen goes out from the holy Temple, the holiest place in the world. He walks to the outskirts of the city, to the place where the metzora is staying, to help him become

pure and come back to his community with more love for his fellow than he had before.

Parsha Questions

- 1) Who does a person, who thinks he has tzaraat, go to? (A Kohen)
- 2) Where does a person who has tzaraat live? (Outside the community)
- 3) Who does a person, who thinks their clothing has tzaraat, bring his clothing to? (A Kohen)
- 4) What do you do to the clothing if the clothing has tzaraat and the spot gets bigger? (Burn the clothing)
- 5) What do you do to the clothing if the clothing has tzaraat and the spot gets lighter? (cut out the area of tzaraat and only burn the piece of clothing with tzaraat)
- 6) In order to clean the metzora's clothing, where do you dip them? (In the mikvah)
- 7) What must a metzora call out when people come near him? (Tamei Tamei)
- 8) What must a metzora cover? (his face)
- 9) What does the metzora have to bring to help make him pure? (Korbanot)
- 10) What does a metzora have to tear? (His clothes)

Loshon Hora: A Lesson from the Metzora

Duvie Zeidel

2018

In this week's Parsha, we learn about Tzaarat which is given to one who speaks Loshon Hora. The beginning of Parshat Metzora starts off with the words "This is law, the Torah, of Tzaarat." Why doesn't the Torah just explain the laws? Why does it need an introduction? We learn in

the Vayikra Rabba that there are actual five places that uses this term when it comes to Tzaarat. This teaches us that one who speaks Loshon Hora is equivalently to violating all 5 books of the Torah. The Alshich further notes that one who studies Torah protects himself from any harm. When studying Torah, one will realize the severity of it and will hopefully, refrain from it. During the time of Sefirat HaOmer, we work on improving our Bein Adam L'Chaveiro which includes refraining from speaking Loshon Hora. May we instill this lesson into our daily lives!

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