

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Tazria	6 Apr., 2019	1 Nisan 5779	Lev. 12:1-13.59	Eze. 45:16-46:18	Luke 22:1-13

This week's Torah portion Tazria usually is read with Metzora. These portions contain many laws in regards to *lashon hara* (evil tongue). Tazria begins with giving birth and leprosy. What is a birth? Spiritually, it means redemption, a strong energy. If such is the case, why does this week's portion is full of leprosy. The Rebbe of Chabad explains that the discoloration of the skin is a high level of spiritual energy as it does not affect the brain, heart, or any internal organs. Since it affects the skin only, he said that Hashem wanted us elevate our *nefesh* (physical soul) to a higher spiritual level.

Chapter 12 tells us that "if a woman" delivers a child, then she will be unclean for seven days. There are 33 days additional uncleanness if the baby is a boy and 66 days for girls. The mother is then commanded to bring a burnt offering and a sin offering. Chapter 13 tells us when a man has leprosy, he is taken to the priest who will determine how the treatment should be done to be clean again. This leprosy applies to garments and the skin.

These laws only applied during the period of the Temple. Today, a woman is considered to be clean when her bleeding stops after a birth. It means her wound is healed and she only has to go to the mikveh (ritual cleansing) to be pure again. The 33 and 66 days of impurity no longer applies as we do not have the Temple with us.

We also don't have leprosy because we don't have the merit to get a clear conversation with Hashem like they had back then. So, if we do *lashon hara*, there is no punishment of stains on clothing or the body. We see an example of Miriam who became leprous after slandering Moshe. Even though she was genuinely concerned for Moshe, the sages explain that her tone was negative. Thus, she was shamed and had to stay outside the camp for seven days. How was she shamed? Every body saw that she was *rasha* (wicked) as she was covered with leprosy.

The sages explain that until the time of Esther, every one saw a clear miracle of Hashem. Now the miracles are still happening, but it is hidden in nature. Hashem said that He will hide His face. Meaning, we are to search for Hashem to see His miracles. For example, people saw the smoke from the Tabernacle went straight up despite the wind blowing from every direction. This also applied to the idols. When the Children of Yisrael demanded a new deity, Aharon threw in a bunch of gold into the fire and out came a Golden Calf: No one knew that an image of Golden Calf would come out and it was able to speak to the people.

Today, we no longer enjoy the merits, rather being closer to Hashem. Because of that Hashem's miracles are hidden in nature of what we call 'coincidences,' we would not know His miracles unless we seek for it. As we are not close to Hashem as the Children of Yisrael, the punishment for *lashon hara* is not seen in this physical world. However, it does affect the *olam haba* (World to Come), if we continue *lashon hara*, we won't have place in the *olam haba*.

The punishment for *lashon hara* mentioned in chapter 13 is a divine punishment. Why? Because the righteous knows that Hashem runs the world and he has no doubt in his *emunah* (faith). For such people, the punishment is immediate. Hashem does not wait until tomorrow. Thus, we need to ask ourselves, how is our *emunah*?

So, how do we control our thoughts that we should not commit *lashon hara*? As we know, the Torah has many layers of understanding. We know that the Torah has two parts: One is Written Torah and the other is Oral Torah. The Written Torah refers to the five books of Moshe and the Oral Torah refers to the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Law). It has many sources from Gemara; which tractate that leads to which verse in the Written Torah to write the law. But there are some laws that does not have sources. In such case, it says *kabbalah* which means 'received.' Meaning, we 'received' the laws from Moshe orally. We see such examples from the Torah when Hashem told the Yisraelites to keep the Pesach and to teach their generations.

When we take actions, there are three things in motion: thoughts, speech, and motion. When we talk, we are creating our own reality by changing the energy around us. When we say something positive, then the surrounding will change to positive energy. If we say something negative, then it will change the energy to negative. This was proven in the scientific community. For example, if we say something positive to a flower, it will blossom and maintain its beauty longer. If we say negative words, the flower will not grow to its fullest potential and wilt away quickly. The flower needs words of encouragement to grow its potential as our souls need positive encouragements. Because our souls also wear multi layers of clothing: thoughts, speech, and action.

Another example: if I wanted to make a fist, first I have to think (thoughts) about it. Then I have to mentally command (speech) the hand to move (act) to make a fist. So, a thought is like a fine linen and an act is coarse linen. Therefore, we are to refine our soul of garments. Our thoughts are so powerful, it can change our speech and behavior (actions). For this reason, when we study the Torah, we cannot read with our eyes. We have to open our mouth and say (act) the words.

Our thoughts are constantly running like a river even when we are sleeping. Unfortunately, not all our thoughts are pure. There are two chambers: purity and impurity. If our thoughts are negative, then the chamber of impurity will pull in more negative energy. It is scientifically proven that if a patient thinks positive that he will be healed and thinks of happy things, the white blood cells will increase in his body to promote healing. Unfortunately, our thoughts and speech stay more on the impurity rather than purity. Therefore, we need to control our thoughts through meditation by observing our thoughts.