

Kinder Torah®

Parashas Tazria-Metzora

בס"ד

The Craftsman

“Look at this shop. There are beautiful wood objects in the window. Let’s go inside.”

“Sure.”

Inside the shop they find a carpenter working on a wooden table. His skilled hands patiently work the wood, carving out beautiful shapes.

“Yes, can I help you?”

“We are admiring your work. Your wooden creations are beautiful.”

“I have been working with wood since I was eight years old. I have the finest tools at my disposal. Still, I must measure every cut that I make very carefully. The smallest mistake will ruin the whole piece.”

“Craftsmanship is a lifelong endeavor.”

“It certainly is.”



“What is a person’s profession in this world? To make himself like a mute.” (Gemora Chullin 89a). A mute person cannot speak. The gemora relates that a person should learn how to be quiet. Learn how to be quiet? What learning is required? Anyone can close his or her mouth. Or can they? The Chofetz Chaim zt”l explains that silence is a profession. A truly excellent craftsman learns his trade at a very young age. It becomes second nature to him. He can approach even the hardest jobs calmly, with the skill necessary to complete them. So too with silence. One must train oneself from the youngest age. Learn to control your speech. Measure every word carefully, as the craftsman measures each cut of the saw blade. When you are placed in a tempting situation, you will have the tools necessary to be quiet and not speak Loshon Hora. You will be a true craftsman.

Kinderlach . . .

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Keep the Shechina With You

“How was school today, Chaim?”

“Great, Abba. We learned about parashas Metzora.”

“It is a fascinating parasha, Chaim.”

“The Rebbe sent us home with a *kasha* (question) Abba. The metzora brings different *korbonos* as part of his purification process. One of them is a *korbon oshom*. What is an *oshom* and why does he bring it?”

“That is an intriguing question, Chaim.”



“The Rebbe told us to look in the Ramban at the end of parashas Vayikra, and the Sforno on parashas metzora to find the answer.”

“Let’s take a look, Chaim. Here is the Ramban. He explains that the name of the *korbon* reveals its essence. *Oshom* is similar to the words *shomom* (desolate) and *ne’evad* (lost). The person committed a very serious *aveyra*. He truly deserved to be *shomom* and *ne’evad*. Instead, of suffering that terrible fate, he does *teshuva* and subsequently receives his *kappora* (atonement) from the *korbon oshom*.”

“That is so interesting, Abba. Why does the metzora bring a *korbon oshom*?”

“The Ramban explains that the metzora is like a dead man. Because of his *aveyra*, he

should be dead – *shomom* and *ne’evad*. That is why he must bring an *oshom*.”

“I am in suspense, Abba. What is his *aveyra*?”

“Let us look in the Sforno, Chaim. He shares with us an amazing insight into the nature of the *oshom*. The principal *aveyra* that requires an *oshom* is *meilah bi’kodesh* – misuse or desecration of the holy things. The metzora’s main sins are *loshon hora* (slander) and *gasos ruach* (haughtiness).”

“How are they *meilah bi’kodesh*, Abba?”

“The Sforno adds that most *loshon hora* is a result of *gasos ruach*. The speaker feels superior to the other person. Therefore, he feels that he is allowed to put him down by speaking *loshon hora* about him. Furthermore, he usually speaks *loshon hora* secretly to his close acquaintance. A person who commits an *aveyra* in secret ‘pushes away the legs of the *Shechina* (Divine Presence).’ By sinning in a private place he is making the statement, ‘The *Shechina* is not here. Hashem does not know about this place and my sin here.’ There is no greater desecration of Hashem’s holiness than this. About such a person Dovid HaMelech writes, ‘He who slanders his neighbor in secret – him I will cut down; one with haughty eyes and an haughty heart, him I cannot bear.’ (Tehillim 101:5). The Targum explains that the slanderer will be stricken with *tsoraas*. The haughty one and Hashem cannot co-exist. The Metsudas Dovid adds that Hashem hates his deeds. Therefore, the metzora pushes away the *Shechina* and desecrates the Holy Name.”

“I never realized that *loshon hora* was so serious, Abba. It is like *meilah bi’kodesh*. That is truly horrible.”

“It is, Chaim. Let us all make a renewed effort to never speak it again!”

Kinderlach . . .

Close your eyes, sit quietly for a few minutes, and feel the Shechina next to you. Hashem is everywhere. He is always with you. He is always there to help you and protect you. With one exception. If you speak loshon hora, you push Him away. Can you imagine that? The Almighty, Creator of the Universe is at your side, ready to help you, comfort you, and protect you. What do you do? Push Him away. What a terrible thing to do. That is the metzora, and that is his korbon oshom. Don’t do it kinderlach! Keep your speech pure, and keep the Shechina with you!