

# TO NOT GET IT

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

*If a Tzaraas affliction will be in a person, he shall be brought to the Kohen. (Vayikra 13:9)*

The Talmud tells us that the Torah begins with kindness and concludes with kindness. In the beginning HASHEM clothes man and in the end HASHEM buries Moshe. What is the Talmud teaching us? I once heard from Rabbi Avigdor Miller ztl. that if you are investigating whether or not to buy a certain book you might study the first page or so and then the last, and safely assume the rest is of similar content. Here we are instructed by the Talmud that the Torah is chock full of kindness, since that's how it start and ends. Now the next question that arises from this is: "Where is the kindness of something like Tzaraas?"

The Talmud tells us about a tendency in human nature that if left uncured can lead to big trouble. "A person does not see his own faults!" We all have blind spots especially when it comes to ourselves. The purpose of the affliction of Tzaraas writes The Chinuch is "to affix in our souls the that the Divine Inspection of HASHEM is upon each and every one of us... Therefore the Torah cautions that the person to whom this terrible malady reached should not take it lightly, rather he should arrest the negative actions that caused it..." How does a person know what he did wrong if he tends to overlook his own faults?

A fellow was seen looking furiously for something beneath a street light. A passerby asked him what he was doing. He answered that he had lost his keys. The observer asked if had lost them right under the street light to which the man answered, "No, but over here there's light!" Albert Einstein said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." How then does one get unstuck?

Imagine driving in comfort down the highway in your 2007 Infiniti when the amber light indicating "engine trouble" goes on. How foolish would it be to just disengage the light and drive blissfully ignorant!? That light's an Infiniti-saver. It brings the owner of the vehicle to a mechanic with insights into the inner workings of that model called "Infiniti". So too the Torah prescribes amongst other remedies to first visit a Cohen, a wise man- a Torah sage- that can evaluate his status and guide him back to a better way. How vulnerable are we nowadays, decries the Chofetz Chaim, without the benefit of such an early warning system.

Immediately upon entering the classroom at 9:00 AM a verbal fight had already erupted between the two usual suspects. Then one let loose an unrepeatable barrage of insults and as the teacher I

had to respond immediately. I informed the one boy with the extra foul language that he had effectively lost his recess that day and with a stern tone I shared with the class something I had learned just that morning before school. "It says in the Zohar that if someone speaks too much Loshon Hora then they might come back as a dog, or a rock, or an insect with the helpless awareness they were humans that had abused their power of speech." (Maybe it was a bit much for 4th graders).

At recess time, the joyful sounds of children reveling in the first glorious Spring-day filled the air. However, one sullen youngster was doing his homework while I was grading tests nearby. He looked up at me sadly and asked sincerely, "Rebbe, how much Loshon Hora do you have to speak to come back as a dog?" Sure, it was cute. Dogs don't have homework or miss recess, and he wished it could be so. He didn't get it, what I had said. We can hardly afford to not get it! Text Copyright &copy 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.