ANYONE CAN FIND

by Rabbi Label Lam

And the person with Tzaraas in whom there is the affliction - his garments shall be torn, the hair of his head shall be unshorn, and he shall cloak himself up to his lips; he is to call out, "Contaminated, contaminated (Vayikra 13:45)

It's a heavy dose of medicine that's dumped upon the Metzora! Why is he isolated? That's a terrible consequence to endure! What had he done so wrong? Everyone knows! He spoke Loshon Hora! His mouth was undisciplined. However there is a step or two prior to his having opened his mouth that could have prevented his personal tragedy that may also explain why he is singled out and removed temporarily from the community.

In the first chapter of Pirke Avos the Mishne reads, "Judge every man to the side of merit!" Actually it may more accurately be read, "Judge the entirety of the man to the side of merit!" It's not so much about who you judge to the side of merit but how you judge one to the side of merit. How does it work?

The Sefas Emes explains the Midrash that tells us, the word, "Metzora" is really a contraction of the words, "Motzi Ra"- finding bad! "Everything in the world is comprised of an admixture of good and bad! So it is with man! However, since in his root he is essentially good, he can overcome the bad, because of the principle, "Mida Tova Meruba"- the good far outweighs the bad! However a person needs to be careful not to isolate and focus on the bad separate from the generality of good. Everything goes back to cleaving to the root...being a part of group can cure!"

When studying any individual it is all too easy to find and focus on a fault. However, if we would be able to compile a list of good qualities they would probably overwhelm the negativity. The natural instinct is to zero in on the foible. The Mishne admonishes us to see the whole person and the blemishes will be blurred into oblivion. That's how to do it!

Recently on a Shabbos morning I came to Shul at our small Litvish neighborhood Shteibl. There in the corner I established my place to pray. There was a gift there that morning. A table Shtender-lectern was set at my spot, unusually so, and I decided to make immediate use of it. It was usually occupied by a sweet down-syndrome boy- a special child who parks nearby a few seats away but he was not there yet and I was ready to grant it to him as soon as he would come. Well no sooner than I had finished my morning Brochos and started Pesukei D'Zimra, in he walked and settled into his usual spot without the lectern. Immediately I uprooted the wooden box and marched it over to

the young man and motioned that I wanted him to have it. He forcefully insisted that he didn't want it managed to successfully repel my offer. I was effectively thwarted by him.

Moments later though something happened that left me in total shock but it took me a few moments to realize what happened. I did not sit as of yet but it did not go unnoticed to me that the seat at my place was one of those old rickety inferior folding chairs that's hard and uncomfortable. I thought about switching but I was not up to that point yet. Well, this kid comes over to where I am sitting and he takes this chair away and replaces it with his own, a big upgrade in quality. I tried to rebuff his gesture but again he actively insisted I like this one. He could possible like it better but I could not derail his agenda. Only later I realized that this boy was a bigger Baal Chessed than me. He has some superior qualities that overshadows any deficiency that **anyone can find!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.