

GIVING THE CRITIC A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 235, Cesarean Section Births. Good Shabbos!

Giving the Critic a Taste of His Own Medicine

The pasuk [verse] says, "And if the Kohen examines the Tzoraas and sees that it has spread, he need not (further) examine the yellow hair, the person is Tameh (impure)" [Vayikra 13:36].

The Baal HaTurim points out that there are only two times in the entire Torah where we find this expression "he need not examine" (lo yevaker). The first time is in our parsha. The second time is in Parshas Bechukosai regarding the laws of Temurah (switched sacrifices) "he shall not distinguish (lo yevaker) between good and bad" [Vayikra 27:33].

The Baal HaTurim explains that there is a connection between these two pasukim [verses]: Since the person was guilty of distinguishing between good and bad (by speaking Lashon Horah), therefore the Kohen has no need to examine his Tzoraas symptoms further and can declare him Tameh (impure) immediately. The Baal HaTurim concludes "...for there are 7 reasons that cause Negaim (ritual skin-blemishes) to come".

This is a classic comment of the Baal HaTurim because it is a riddle. Anyone is welcome to speculate over the meaning of this Baal HaTurim during his or her Shabbos seudah [meal]. My feeling is that the meaning of the Baal HaTurim is the following:

What is the sin of Lashon Horah all about? When we distill Lashon Horah to its basic form, what does it consist of? Basically, Lashon Horah is about criticizing. It is the uncanny ability to look at a person or situation and to find what is wrong -- to latch on to the shortcomings and the downside. There is good and bad in all of us. We are not all good and we are not all bad. It is possible to look at a person and say "He's stingy, he's this, he's that, etc." But that same person also has positive traits. The chronic Lashon Horah speaker never sees these positive traits. He chooses to look at the bad and to criticize. He chooses to examine every person under a microscope and always come to the conclusion that there are faults and shortcomings.

This is the meaning of the Baal HaTurim. When a person transgresses the crime of "You shall not examine between good and bad" (he always examines, always looks for fault and always criticizes), he will be punished measure for measure. He will come to the Kohen and the Torah will instruct the Kohen "Do not examine any further" -- rule that he is Tameh on the spot. Let him receive some of his own medicine. Teach the importance of my command "You shall not scrutinize (further)..." to he who always scrutinizes.

Transcribed by [David Twersky](#); Seattle, Washington.
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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion (#235). The corresponding halachic portion for this tape is: Cesarean Section Births. The other halachic portions for Parshas Tazria/Metzora from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

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