

This shall be the law of the Metzora. (14:2)

Imagine working an entire lifetime on a project, building up a company from scratch until it is a global player, only to lose everything due to a simple, foolish error. It would be devastating. The **Chovas HaLevavos** writes that, when an individual speaks *lashon hora* against someone – even if the “someone” is evil – the one who speaks forfeits all of his *mitzvos*, which are, in turn, given to the person against whom he has spoken. The speaker becomes the sorry “beneficiary” of the slandered person. It seems like an unfair trade, but, unfortunately, it is what it is. He has lost it all. What is worse, the other fellow -- with whom he apparently has issues -- has just been bequeathed all of his *mitzvos* and *zechusim*, merits. The “speaker” is left spiritually devoid of anything, while the “other guy” has just won the spiritual lottery!

Horav Yehudah Tzedakah, zl, applies this thought to explain an ambiguous phrase, part of the *Tefillah*, prayer, recited in the *Hadran*, upon completion of a Tractate of *Talmud*. *She'tehei Torascha umanuseinu b'olam ha'zeh, v'tehei imanu b'Olam Habba*, “That your Torah will be our vocation in this world, and will be with us in the World to Come.” What is the meaning of this phrase? If Torah is one's vocation in this world, if he devotes his time to studying Torah, why should it not accompany him, acting as his source of merit in the World to Come?

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that one can arrive in *Olam Habba* empty-handed, despite having lived a life replete with Torah study and *mitzvah* performance. It might have been one foolish envy, which spurred him to compound his senseless behavior with a few choice negative comments about the person who was the subject of his envy. An entire life of observance – gone. We ask Hashem to protect us, so that what we have achieved in *olam hazeh* accompanies us to *Olam Habba*. He had been insecure concerning his friend's success; he was troubled by an individual's lack of ethical/moral behavior. At the time, in his small mind, it might have seemed to be righteous indignation. Hashem considers it to be blatant *lashon hora*. The fellow whom he was trying to put down ultimately receives the reward and honor originally set aside for the one who ran off at the mouth. Now, he really has something about which to be jealous.