

“He is a person with tzaraas, he is contaminated, the Kohen shall declare him contaminated, his affliction is upon his head.” (13:44)

In the various forms of *tzaraas* mentioned previously in the *parsha*, the Torah has either written *tamei hu*, he is ritually impure, or *v'timo ha'Kohen*, the *Kohen* shall declare him *tamei*. Regarding *nigei ha'rosh*, the plague that sets itself upon one's head, the Torah emphasizes *ish tzarua hu*, he is a person with *tzaraas*, and then reiterates the status of impurity with the words, “The *Kohen* shall declare him contaminated.” Why such emphasis upon *tzaraas ha'rosh*?

The *Netziv*, *z.l.*, explains that unlike the other forms of *tzaraas*, which are a punishment for *lashon hara*, evil speech, *tzaraas ha'rosh* is visited upon one who is deficient in his thoughts, reflecting a lack of *emunah*, faith in the Almighty. One whose faith in Hashem is questionable is a person from whom we should distance ourselves even more than from he who speaks *lashon hara*. The slanderer who disparages with his mouth – whose mouth is a fountain of evil, spewing forth venom, invectives and defamation of people's character – hurts. He hurts himself. He hurts others, but he does not establish disciples that follow in his ways.

The individual who has a serious problem in his *emunah*, whose mind is perverted with heretical thoughts, who questions the Almighty, is not satisfied with his own apostasy. He has to develop followers, to spread and increase his tainted ideas, to inspire others with his crippled mind. The Torah is concerned with such a person. His effect is far-reaching. We are admonished to stay clear of him and his ideas. He is an *ish tzarua*, a person with *tzaraas*.