

## "When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh..." (13:2)

It is stated throughout *Chazal* that the various plagues are a direct result of speaking slander. Why do not gentiles receive a similar punishment? Is it not likewise improper for them to speak *lashon horah*? We may respond by reflecting upon the harm that is caused by speaking *lashon horah*. Slander in its various forms causes tremendous harm to interpersonal relations. The unified social structure of our people can be destroyed through the spreading of slander. The Jewish people have as a mandate from Hashem to be unified, to exist in harmony with each other. Since the soul of *Klal Yisroel* is a "*small divine fragment from Heaven*", it is an inherent part of our continued existence to remain harmonious and unified. Any person who causes danger and threat to this entity must be punished. As for the gentile nations, although social harmony is commendable, it is not an integral part of their existence. On the contrary, their harmony, can be detrimental and harmful when used for the wrong purposes.

The commentaries have noted regarding the words of *Chazal* "*You are called man but the gentile nations are not called man*" (*Bava Metzia 114*) that the various words for describing man- "aht/aubt" can be pluralized, "ohaht /ohabt" while the word "ost" has no plural form. This implies that the word ost exemplifies unity and oneness. Only the *Bnei Yisroel* who have this mandate of oneness as an inherent trait are referred to as *Adam*. This is reflected in the *posuk* -"vhvh hf ost" - it is because we are called *adam* that we are affected by plagues, to remind us against causing disharmony among our people.