

## And for the person being purified there shall be taken two live, clean birds, cedarwood, crimson thread and hyssop. (14:4)

The root of *lashon hora* is arrogance. The arrogant person feels he can talk about others with disdain. Haughtiness breeds contempt for all people, other than the slanderer himself. During the process of purification, the *metzora* goes through a penance which entails his commitment to change his deeds. The three items that accompany his *korban* symbolize sin and its *teshuvah*. Cedarwood, which grows tall and wide, symbolizes haughtiness. The crimson thread is dyed with a dye that is derived from a lowly creature. The hyssop is a lowly bush. Both of these latter items allude to the *metzora's* newfound humility.

The **Chidushei Ha'Rim** comments that the crimson thread and hyssop allude to sin which is the result of humility. Yes, a pe

erson can sin by being too humble or humble at an inappropriate time: When people turn to someone for help; if the community needs leadership or someone to take action; if a travesty is taking place and one apathetically shies away. In such cases he sins by being too humble. Would he be so filled with humility if it was his own honor that was at stake? All too often, we tend to become humble out of a sense of insecurity and indifference. That does not constitute humility; rather it is cowardice.