

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

The term *metzora* is comprised of the construct *motzi-ra*, brings out bad (about his fellow). This is a *baal lashon hora*. The *Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh* teaches that one who speaks negatively about his fellow is still called a *baal lashon hora*, even if what he says is the truth. When one sins, he is called a *baal aveirah*, *baal lashon hora*; the word *baal* means husband of. Why is this? Furthermore, when a boy reaches the age of thirteen, he is called a *bar-mitzvah*, *bar*, meaning son of. With regard to *mitzvos*, one is called a son, while concerning one's relationship with sin, he is considered a sort of husband to the sin.

This question was posed by one of the speakers at the *bar-mitzvah* celebration held in honor of a member of the family of the *Chiddushei HaRim*. Why is a sinner called *baal*, and one who enters the yoke of *mitzvos* referred to as *bar*? The speaker explained (quoted by *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, in *Niflaosecha Asicha*) that with regard to *mitzvos* we are considered children (of), since we do not separate ourselves from our parents. Hashem is our Heavenly Father. Through *mitzvah* observance we remain close. Thus, one who studies/devotes himself to a life of Torah is called a *ben*, son of, (the) Torah.

One's relationship with sin is in converse. It is not an inextricable bond. One can tear it asunder through *teshuvah*, repentance. Just like a husband's bond can be severed through divorce, we are able to separate ourselves from the clutches of sin through repentance, so that we are able to return to Hashem. One who repents is called a *baal teshuvah*, because the process of repentance is not an easy one to achieve, while remaining connected. To achieve the pinnacle of repentance to the point that one can say that he has fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *teshuvah* is a difficult – yet attainable – climb.

Why is one who has a physical blemish (*Kohen* who is not permitted to serve in the *Bais Hamikdash*) called a *baal mum*?? The speaker explained that one day, with the advent of the *geulah sheleimah*, ultimate and complete Final Redemption, everyone will be healed as they were at *Har Sinai*. There will no longer be any *baalei mum*.