

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

Tzaraas is the Heavenly-designated punishment for one who is *motzi ra*, speaks *lashon hara*, slander. One does not just speak *lashon hara* because he has nothing better to do. He always has a reason. It may not make sense; indeed, it may even be ludicrous, but to the one who is doing the speaking, it is a reason worth transgressing six *aveiros*, sins. One of the most “popular” reasons for speaking *lashon hara* is *sinas chinam*, unwarranted hatred: “I simply do not like that person. I have no legitimate reason, but, if you give me a few moments, I will come up with something.”

This is *sinas chinam*: hatred for no reason, or a reason that is contrived for the purpose of hating. *Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl*, describes *sinas chinam* practically, in a manner that demonstrates the source of the problem and explains why so many are plagued by unwarranted hatred.

Simply put, *sinas chinam* is the result of envy. Reuven has a brand-new luxury car; Shimon has a used ten-year old car. Shimon wonders why he has the old car, while his neighbor has a luxury car. Reuven has a checking account that has a comfortable surplus of funds; Shimon, unfortunately, must pray every month that his checks do not bounce. Shimon wonders why he must have the shorter end of the rope, while Reuven is always doing well. Indeed, Shimon feels that if he had Reuven’s balance in his checkbook, he would make better use of the funds. This is a situation that is untenable, because everyone has a twinge of envy within him, which invariably manifests itself in unwarranted hatred. How does one resolve the issue? What can we, or should we, do to prevent the envy from surfacing?

Rav Pinchas explains that the problem results from the perspective that I am Reuven, and he is Shimon. If we would/could just drop the names and replace them with: “I am a *Yehudi*, and he is a *Yehudi*,” we would no longer be envious, and, with no envy, we would not experience *sinas chinam*. As a result, *Moshiach* can come, and that will be the end of all our problems. It’s as simple as that.

P.S. This idea works equally concerning *lashon hara*, gossip. If we are both *Yehudim*, on the same basis, we have no reason to be jealous enough to initiate hatred or slander.