



Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFKA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

פ ר ש ת מ צ ר ע

מים חיים אל כלי

The purification of the metzora involves water from a natural well spring, which the Torah refers to as mayim chayim literally, 'living water'. Although the Torah is replete with directives to use water in the service of the Beis Hamikdash and purification processes, using mayim chayim is necessary in very few cases.

The Chidushei HaRim offers insight into the Torah's requisite of such water in the purification of the metzora and its lessons is something we can all glean from: One of the other unique components of the purification of the metzora is the use of cedar wood and hyssop. The cedar is among the tallest of trees. Hyssop is a bush that grows close to the ground. Chazal tell us that tzara'as was inflicted upon people who spoke lashon hara, a sin that stems from haughtiness which caused him to speak badly of others. The cedar wood symbolizes the root of his error. The cure to his illness is to lower his image of self and to realize that in many ways, those other people are greater than he. This is alluded to by the lowly hyssop bush. Only by lowering himself can a person begin the path to proper teshuva.

Yet within this remedy lies a danger; a person may come to feel despondent. Lacking the proper sense of self worth can cause him to give up. Indeed, self esteem is necessary to function as a productive member of society.



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More than this, the actions of every Jew are significant in and of themselves. The solution to this malady lies in the mayim ha'chayim; the natural spring constantly grows and renews itself. Its water is fresh and alive. The message is simple. Instead of feeling dejected and depressed, be like the water and begin anew with a fresh start. The potential is infinite.