

Lord of the Doppelganger Flies (Metzora)

If we were faultless we should not be so much annoyed by the defects of those with whom we associate. -Francois Fenelon

Ever heard a piece of really juicy gossip? A man cheated on his wife? A businessman caught for financial wrongdoing? Or some other nonsensical tidbit of embarrassing or deprecatory trivia? Well, according to Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Prague, the Kli Yakar (1550-1619), there is a high likelihood that the purveyors of such gossip are themselves guilty of the very same crimes they are so eager to point out.

According to the Kli Yakar on Leviticus 14, the gossip is like a fly. A fly will scour the entire body of a person. The fly will inspect every inch of flesh and ignore the strong, whole, healthy skin. The fly will zoom in on any bit of exposed, unhealthy, putrid flesh. The fly will feast on the diseased part of the person.

The Kli Yakar adds an additional point. Such flies, such gossipers, are not only attracted to the bad in every person. They are attracted to those faults, those problems that mirror their own. They assume that others have the same faults and issues as they do and will gleefully point out that very fault in others.

So, the next time that a gossip reveals the problems of others, take a step back and consider whether it is a confession on their part instead.

May we keep our ears and mouths closed to gossip. We might catch a fly.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

Dedication

To all the forces, national, international and divine, that intercepted the recent Iranian missile and drone barrage against us.