



TableTalk: Parshat Tazria

Is there ever a good time to gossip?

In this week's Torah reading, Parshat Tazria, we learn about *tzara'at*, translated as leprosy, although in reality, it shares very little in common with this disease. *Tzara'at* comes as a *negah*, an affliction, from God. It is sent as a punishment for 7 sins listed in the Gemara, the most famous of which is gossip / slander. *Tzara'at* is not contagious, one does not see a doctor, but rather a priest, and the cure is 7 days sitting outside the camp doing *teshuva*, repentance.

Why do you think one is sent outside the camp for speaking gossip? How is that a fitting punishment?

Think of it as a time-out for adults! If one cannot live in a community, respecting others and caring about their reputation and dignity, then he/she must leave that community.

Why do you think people talk Lashon HaRa – gossip and slander – about other people?

- To feel better about themselves
- To embarrass someone
- Because they're bored and just not thinking

How can we improve our filter when we speak? How can you try to be better about not talking about other people? Discuss, at your table, ways to overcome the desire to speak about others.

When are you allowed to share information about someone else – and it's not considered *Lashon HaRa*?

If you need to get someone's help or you need help with someone or the information you want to share will help someone else, a third party THEN, it is ok to talk with someone and share the information.

Have you ever been unsure about whether to say something about someone else? Give an example about how it can be hard to know if it's the right thing to do.