



MESSAGE FROM THE RAV

Dear Chevra

Welcome to our minyan. We hope you had a good week and wish you a wonderful Shabbat.

The Torah devotes almost two entire parshiot to a topic that we have difficulty relating to these days – צרעת. No longer does this spiritual disease affect us or our houses. The Gemara in Erchin 15b connects צרעת with the motzi shem ra – the person who has slandered his fellow Jew and goes into extremely frightening descriptions and punishments for one who speaks lashon hara: Hashem raises the level of his other sins to the level of the three cardinal sins; he is worthy of סקילה; Hashem can't live in the same world as him – and more. The Chafetz Chaim further connects Lashon Hara to שנאת חנם and reminds us that the first Beit Hamikdash was destroyed because of the three cardinal sins and the second because of שנאת חנם thus connecting the speaking of Lashon Hara to destroying the Beit Hamikdash. And if that isn't enough, the Gemara finishes off dealing with this topic by saying: כל המספר לשון הרע – כאילו כפר בעיקר – Speaking lashon hara is like denying the existence of G-d!

Why is the sin of Lashon Hara so grave? To answer all questions, we need to return to the source. Speech is the tool of creation. Hashem could have created the world with thought or action, but He chose speech: בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם – The world was created with ten utterances! “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never harm me” is not a Jewish concept. The root of מדבר – speech – is דבר – the thing itself. Humanity, created בצלם אלוקים – in the image of ה', creates worlds through speech, just as Hashem did. The very essence of the human is speech. אונקלוס

translates the human as רוח ממללה – a speaking spirit. Only man has the ability to speak. It is a very result of the combination of soul and body. The soul has thoughts, and desires to express them through the human body. It does that through speech. Speech in essence is what makes us human.

Now we can understand the gravity of lashon hara and the punishments that faced those in history who transgressed this sin. Miriam was punished for speaking lashon hara about Moshe Rabeinu; Moshe Rabeinu was punished with צרעת at the burning bush when he spoke badly of עם ישראל saying that they won't believe that G-d has sent him; and the מרגלים were punished for speaking lashon hara about Eretz Yisrael. Chazal teach us that Moshe and Aharon were supposed to speak to the rock to rectify the sin of the spies. They hit the rock instead of speaking to it and therefore couldn't enter the land themselves.

How do we overcome speaking lashon hara? Unfortunately, there is no quick solution to this question. The Chafetz Chaim goes through many chapters describing the halachot and results of lashon hara in Shmirat Halashon. A continual learning of these halachot keeps one in the mindset required to avoid this sin. In addition, we have spoken about the fundamental requirement of maintaining a G-d focused life. If we are always thinking לנגדי תמיד – I always place Hashem before me, we are more likely to achieve our desired constant focus on קדושה. Finally, the metzora is required to come to the kohen to pronounce him cleansed. Why to a kohen and not to a doctor? The person coming to the kohen to be purified has to spend time with the אוהב שלום ורודף שלום – the lover of peace and chaser of peace in order to learn how not to speak lashon hara – by loving our fellow Jew.

שבת שלום
רב שמואל וטליה

THE LATEMINYAN SEND OUR CONDOLENCES TO NACHUM AND NECHAMA KANOVSKY ON THE LOSS OF THEIR BROTHER MOSHE.



חג עצמאות שמח





YOM HA'ATZMAUT IN THE EYES OF RAV KOOK BY RAV SHLOMO AVINER

Three times a day in the Shmona Esrai, we tell God that we are "anticipating salvation." Our Rabbis tell us that on the Day of Judgment, one of the questions each person is asked is "Have you anticipated the salvation?" (Shabbat 31), i.e., "Have you eagerly awaited the fulfillment of the prophecies of redemption?" (Rashi, ibid.). The Ran adds, "In your lifetime." We must take a good hard look at what is happening around us. God has begun the salvation of His people, but it is a slow process. Nevertheless, giant strides have already been taken, and "The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps" (Psalms 121:4).

The redemption has been compared to dawn, when light and darkness are mixed together. Redemption comes step by step, and some steps are shrouded in darkness. "My beloved is like a deer" (Song of Songs), and "just as a deer appears and disappears, so does the Redeemer." There are ups and downs, victories and crises.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook teaches us that "anticipating the salvation" has two components (Olat Re'iyah Siddur, vol. I, p.279):

- 1) We must have absolute faith that God has not abandoned his people, and that He is constantly pushing us toward salvation, even if this is not evident in our every day life, and may even seem contradictory. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, author of Mesilat Yesharim, compares the redemption to a giant clock, with dozens of wheels, all quietly revolving and progressing toward the desired hour. It may be added that some of these wheels revolve contra-clockwise, but they also have a part in the Divine design.
- 2) We must "anticipate constructively." We must be alert and take advantage of every opportunity which presents itself to bring about the redemption. Every single act adds something, every penny adds up. In the Zohar, Mashiach is compared to an egg being hatched. On the face of things, nothing happens while the mother sits in her nest - but suddenly, the egg hatches. Of course, the chick is a product of countless portions of warmth which eventually added up. The Talmud tells us that a Bat-kol is heard in the tents of the righteous (the yeshivot) and on the hilltops (the settlements), declaring: "All those who have acted together with God shall be rewarded." Happy is he who does not passively watch history pass by, but takes an active role in the history of the Jewish people.

We knew in advance that revival of the Jewish nation would be a complicated and drawn-out process. Therefore, when crises come, we are pained but not surprised. "I believe with complete faith in the coming of the Messiah, even though he may delay," even though the road is long. "Nevertheless, I anticipate his coming every day." With all the problems, troubles, failures, withdrawals, and crises, with all these, I anticipate his coming. This is the test of true faith.



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SHABBAT SHALOM

FROM THE LATE MINYAN

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