

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
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GIVEN OVER BY MOHOROSH ZT"L AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORA
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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

ALONE WITH HASHEM

What could be better than a life of peace? No arguments, no resentment, never any hard feelings... When living amongst people with different natures and needs, is such an existence even possible?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:14*) that we can only live in peace with others when we have *yiras shamayim* – the knowledge that Hashem runs the world. When a person knows with certainty that nothing can ever happen without Hashem's consent, he doesn't get upset at others; he who has *yiras shamayim* lives in harmony with all those around him.

The problems begin when a person forgets about Hashem. He then lives in suspicion of others, afraid that they will harm him. Thinking that people are at fault when things go wrong, he is quick to blame and badmouth others, causing arguments and strife.

בָּדָד יֵשֵׁב מִחוּץ לַמִּשְׁכָּה מוֹשְׁבֵּוֹ

He (the metzora) must sit alone outside the camp.

In the times of the *mishkan* and the *Beis Hamikdash*, Hashem did not allow people to spread anger and resentment. He who spoke *lashon hara* and caused *machlokes* became a *metzora*, a leper, and had to go sit alone.



Seclusion is terribly painful for a person without *emunah*; since his "religion" is people, he feels unbearably lonely without them. Outside the camp, cut off from everyone else, there was only one thing for the *metzora* to do: think. He had to think and think until he came to the realization that Hashem runs the world. Alone, the *metzora* was forced to realize that everything is from Hashem and that there is no purpose in speaking *lashon hara*. Alone, he began talking to Hashem instead and turned to **Him** for help. This is exactly what the *metzora's* isolation needed to accomplish, and once he was cured of his spiritual malady, his *tzora'as* was cured as well.

Today we have no *Beis Hamikdash*, no *tzora'as* and no *chutz lamachaneh*. But *lashon hara* **does** exist. Can anyone say that he is truly unsullied by this sin?

Chazal say (*Bava Basra 166*) that *lashon hara* is one of the sins for which we all need to do *teshuva*. Let's solve the root of the problem: the lack of *emunah*. We need to realize that Hashem is the One Who makes everything happen and is therefore the only One to talk to. By strengthening our belief in Hashem, we'll stop speaking negatively about others and we will be *zoche* to a life of peace and happiness.

Toch Hanachal, Tazria-Metzora 5761

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

LASHON HARA

Words are tremendously powerful. One word carelessly spoken can wreak terrible damage – for generations. *Lashon hara* is so terrible that *Chazal* teach us (*Eruchin 15*) that speaking slanderously is worse than the three cardinal sins: idolatry, immorality and bloodshed. A person who speaks *lashon hara* is no better than a dog, "barking" at the slightest provocation (real or imagined); therefore, our *chachamim* say (*Pesachim 118*) that a *ba'al lashon hara* deserves to be thrown to the dogs.

Despite all we know about the evils of *lashon hara*, somehow we still find ourselves speaking negatively about others again and again. Some people do so more, some people less, yet *Chazal* teach us (*Bava Basra 166*) that the *aveira* of *lashon hara* is universal; everybody sins in this area, in some form or another.

The only way to triumph in this struggle is by beseeching Hashem for His help. Each day, one must daven not to stumble into the sin of *lashon hara*, because only with Hashem's help can a person succeed in overcoming his *yetzer hara*. After saying *birchas haTo-*

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anonymously as a *zechus* for a *shidduch*.

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Dear ...

I received your letter and will attempt to clarify your drastic misconceptions. The holy Rebbe once said (*Sichos Haran 51*), “The *taavos* that destroy man are not desires at all, but rather basic necessities. A person must eat and drink in order to have strength to serve Hashem, he must sleep so he can then daven and learn, and he must be married so that he can fulfill Hashem’s will to bear children.”

Establish *shiurim* in the Rebbe’s *sefarim* and a new world will be opened to you. You will start eating with Hashem, sleeping with Hashem and feeling His Presence in your home. This is what the Rebbe teaches us, and what Mohorosh always reiterated. There is no need to detach oneself from the physical world in order to be righteous and holy. It is a mistaken assumption that to be *erlich*, one must abstain from all pleasures and conduct himself in a strange manner.

The Rebbe relates (*Likutei Moharan 2:116*) that when he met *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov *zt”l* in Eretz Yisroel, they told him that they had never been able to imagine that Eretz Yisroel was a place in the physical world. They thought it was some kind of otherworldly place that exists only in heaven, since so many *sefarim* speak about its tremendous holiness. However, after having traveled to Eretz Yisroel and walked on its holy soil, they realized that there is no external difference between Eretz Yisroel and other lands; rather, it’s the essence of the land that is unparalleled in its holiness. R’ Nossan explained that the Rebbe related this story in order to teach us about the proper way to relate to *Olam Hazeh*. Many people mistakenly think that it is possible to see a physical difference between a *tzaddik* and an ordinary person; however, externally a *tzaddik* looks exactly like a simple person does, even though his essence is completely different. The Rebbe said, “It may appear that he has the same body as another, but he is really something else entirely.” The same is true of Eretz Yisroel – it looks like any other land, but really is something so much more. The *Zohar Hakadosh* says (*Vayakhel 209*) that Eretz Yisrael even has a different sky than the rest of the world; we simple people can’t perceive it, yet the Rebbe says that a person who believes in its holiness can notice small differences between Eretz Yisroel and other lands.

How can you think that a wife is “*taavos*” and one must distance himself from his wife? Take a look at what Chazal have to say (*Yevamos 63*): *R’ Chiya’s wife used to cause him much suffering, yet despite her behavior, whenever R’ Chiya saw anything his wife liked, he brought it home for her. Rav once asked R’ Chiya, “Rebbe, I don’t understand – why do you bring her so many good things when she causes you so much pain?” To which R’ Chiya replied, “It is enough for me that she protects me from sin and raises our children.”*

See the perspective of the holy R’ Chiya, who was so great that even the *Malach Hamaves* had no power over him (*Moed Katan 28*); look at how he held his wife in such high regard because she protected him from *aveiros* and helped him raise their children.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #3, page 260



rah – before the day has even begun! – it is fitting to add one’s own *tefilla* to be able to avoid the sin of *lashon hara* for that day.

The Torah tells us (*Vayikra 19:16*), “לא תלך רכיל בעמך” – don’t be a gossip-monger.” There are, unfortunately, some people whose primary joy in life is spreading *lashon hara* about others. The smallest error, the slightest misstep, the most innocuous faux pas, gets placed in the glaring limelight as *ba’alei lashon hara* pitilessly share the negative information even with all those who wouldn’t have known it otherwise. Why do they do this? What possesses them to be so heartless?

Chazal teach us (*Kesubos 59b*) that idleness leads to sin. When a person is not productively occupied, he doesn’t get to taste the joy of accomplishment. Lacking a sense of fulfillment, he turns to foolish pursuits instead in the hope that it’ll provide the inner satisfaction that he craves. The *yetzer hara* ensures that speaking *lashon hara* provides instant gratification – malicious and fleeting, but gratification nonetheless – and therefore, those who can’t find anything better to do with their time often revert to peddling gossip.

As everyone really knows, the truth is that speaking or listening to *lashon hara* does not provide true satisfaction. Lasting pleasure comes only from investing oneself in spiritual pursuits: davening, learning, performing acts of *chesed*, busying oneself with other *mitzvos*, etc. In our daily *tefilla* to be protected from speaking *lashon hara*, we must also ask Hashem to help us be busy with the right things so that we don’t feel the need to entertain ourselves with gossip.

Did You Hear?

Speaking slanderously is not the only thing included in the *issur* of *lashon hara*. Listening to negative speech about others is also forbidden, yet it is something we engage in too often.

Somehow, *lashon hara* is always so easily heard and accepted. Even in the case that we may be well acquainted with the subject of the *lashon hara* and know that he/she is a genuinely good person, as soon as we hear one negative word about him/her, we immediately accept it as an indisputable fact.

Lashon hara is so powerful that even if we consciously refuse to believe what was said, the damage has



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already been done. Once a seed of doubt about a person's character has been planted, it is nearly impossible to remove it.

The problem is that we are too eager to hear everything. Why must we listen to every word that is said? We would all be much better off if we wouldn't involve ourselves so much in others' business.

"Large ears are a sign of a fool," the *Zohar Hakadosh* says (*Yisro 75b*). This is referring to those who have "big ears" and always need to be in the know. Being the one with latest scoop and the *maven* on all the "*hock*" is not a sign of wisdom but of foolishness. A wise person is he who doesn't involve himself in every last scandal but rather keeps to himself, knowing that he will somehow be informed of whatever is necessary for him to know and that he is better off not hearing what is unnecessary.



The Baal Hatanya *zt"l* lost most of his hearing in his old age. He once said, "What is wrong with not being able to hear? What I want to say, I can say; what others have to say doesn't interest me. Why then should I have to hear?"

R' Nachman Hordenker *zt"l*, a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov *zt"l*, had refined his hearing so well that he was virtually "deaf" to anything that was not pertinent to his *avodas Hashem*. Anything that was not necessary for him to hear, his ears simply did not pick up. The Baal Shem Tov was once expounding on R' Nachman Hordenker's greatness to his *talmidim* – with R' Nachman himself in the audience. To the other *talmidim's* surprise, they saw R' Nachman Hordenker himself leaning closer, as if to better hear his own praises! The Baal Shem Tov understood what must have been going through their minds and said, "This *tzaddik* is not listening to one word I am saying. In fact, he doesn't even hear me! R' Nachman Hordenker has davened so much to purify his hearing that he can't hear things that are not necessary for him to hear. He leaned closer because he saw my lips moving, and he wanted to hear the words of Torah that he is sure I am saying."

Fortunate is he who is careful not to speak or listen to any *lashon hara*, but rather keeps himself busy with what is truly worthwhile. One who guards his tongue from evil speech will merit the fulfillment of the *passuk* (*Tehillim 34:13*), *מי האיש החפץ* *מִי הָאִישׁ הַחֹפֵץ* and experience a good life in This World and the Next.

Sichos Mohorosh Volume 5 and 13 Erech Lashon Hara; Volume 15 Erech Shmi'ah



in America have the same struggles with *parnassa* that you have in Eretz Yisrael. It is therefore not worthwhile for you to travel abroad and leave your wife for such a long time.

Children's storybooks are full of tales of the *shtetlach* of old, where the *poritz* of the town would demand that "Moshke" dance as entertainment for his parties. Sadly, the same occurs today, although the script is slightly different. Here in America, there are *gevirim* who invite *meshulachim* for Shabbos meals solely to impress their wives and sons-in-law – they invite the "poor Jew from Eretz Yisrael", grill him on all the politics in his hometown, and then on Motza'ei Shabbos give him a "generous" twenty dollar bill... Exhausted after running around all week trying to raise money, the *meshulach* just want to relax a bit, but instead he has to entertain his "*poritz*" – and then all he has to show for it is twenty dollars!

And door-to-door? Each *meshulach* is asked for a letter of recommendation; if he doesn't have one from *Badatz*, he is sent away in disgrace, but with a letter of recommendation from *Badatz*, he suffers even greater disgrace – he gets one measly dollar...

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 187

THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS:

This Shabbos, we will begin learning a new masechta, Maseches Sh'vuos.

It's a short masechta that'll take only 49 days to complete – don't wait to begin! Don't be left behind! Learning a daf Gemara each day blesses a person with abundant parnassa and causes him to become an erliche Yid. Hold onto the daf; stay strong with learning Torah each day. R' Sheftil, the son of the Shelah Hakadosh, wrote the following in his will: "Learning a daf Gemara each day should be as important to you as putting on tefillin – be sure to do it every day without compromise."

**TO HEAR THE DAILY DAF SHIUR GIVEN BY THE ROSH YESHIVA,
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SHOULD I TRAVEL TO AMERICA TO COLLECT TZEDAKA?

Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I live in Eretz Yisrael and I derive much chizuk from all the shiurim and letters. I feel that the Rosh Yeshivah can understand me; therefore, I wanted to ask my question although it's a bit demeaning.

Like many others here in Eretz Yisrael, I struggle greatly with parnassa. Some people, in order to alleviate the situation, travel to America to collect money for themselves and their families. Is this an advisable option for me? Should I also try my luck at it?

Thank you.



The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

Don't fool yourself into thinking that in America lies your salvation. Coming here to collect tzedaka is nothing more than a waste of time.

Chazal relate the following story (Tanchuma, Tazria 6):

There was once a kohen in Eretz Yisrael who made a living by checking nega'im to ascertain whether or not they are tzora'as. When his financial state became too strained, he conceived a plan to leave Eretz Yisrael to perhaps earn a more profitable living in chutz la'aretz. However, he had a dilemma: although he very badly wanted to travel, he felt terrible about forsaking all those who were relying on him to check their nega'im. Therefore, he decided to teach his wife the pertinent halachos, in order that she would be able to determine the status of nega'im for other and he would be able to leave Eretz Yisrael with a clear conscience.

A few weeks before his intended departure, the man sat down with his wife and proceeded to teach her all the details of nega'im. "If you see a hair whose follicle is dried out, know

that the hair is afflicted," he said. "Hashem provided every hair in a person's body with a form of sustenance, but if the sustenance is lost, the hair dies."

At this, his wife declared, "If Hashem created every hair on a person's body with a separate channel of nourishment, don't you think that you – a human being with countless hairs on your own body and a wife and children who rely on you for sustenance – can also be provided for?" With her timely words of encouragement, his morale was lifted and he abandoned his plans to search for greener pastures.

A person who has no money is allowed to collect tzedaka for himself (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 353). For your own sake, however, don't let your wife know that you are collecting for yourself; rather, what you should say is, "I'm collecting for a friend who is struggling to cover his daily living expenses."

Many Jews from Eretz Yisrael look at their American counterparts with envy, thinking that the streets in America are paved with gold. However, that is far from the truth. People

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